



Merri Health

Healthcare that moves with you



Integrated Health Promotion

Annual report 2017-2018

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REPORT

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An overview
of projects

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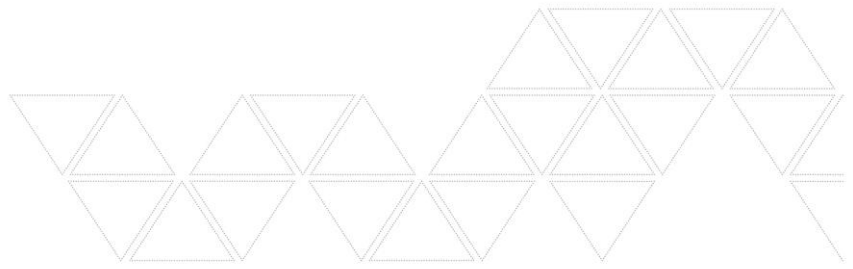
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Introduction

This forms part of the first annual report under Merri Health’s *Integrated Health Promotion Strategic Plan 2017-2021* (IHP Strategy).

Structured in the same format as the IHP Strategy, this report includes:

- An overview of all initiatives implemented in our identified places/settings: Fawkner, Glenroy, Moreland schools and Merri Health (page 3-9)
- A snapshot of our partnerships (page 10-11)
- In-depth case studies on seven initiatives (page 12-44)

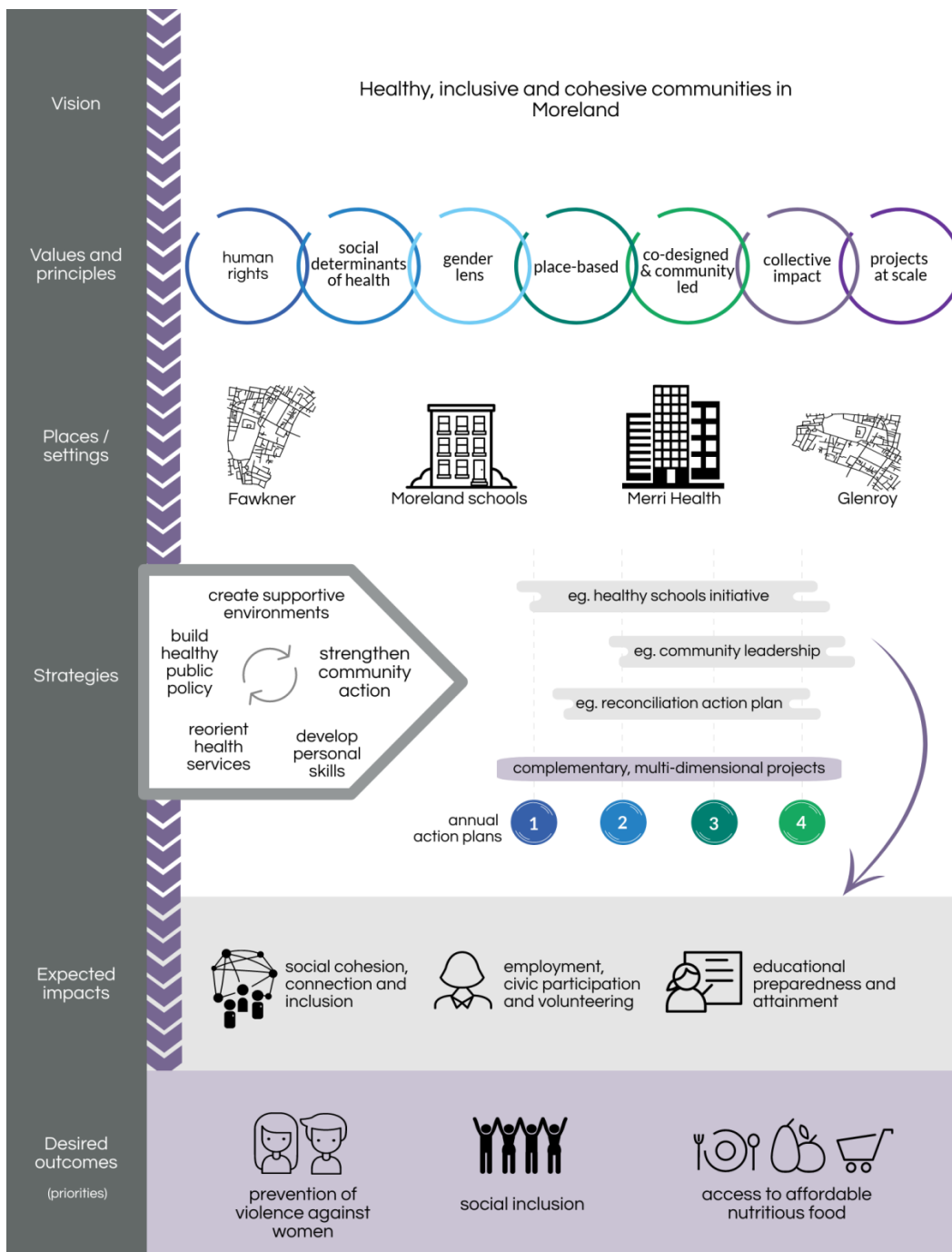
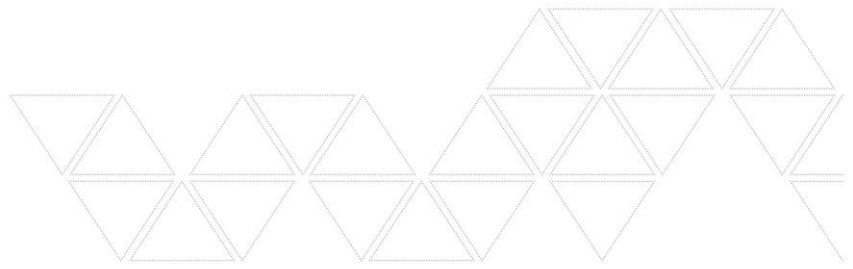


Image: Summary of IHP Strategy



Place-based initiatives



Fawkner

Baseline data

Over three months, Merri Health undertook a community survey of 254 residents of Fawkner to collect baseline data to inform place-based initiatives in Fawkner.

Residents were asked about their perceptions of their health, connection to community and each other, experiences of education and employment, and aspirations for change in Fawkner.

Key stakeholders were also interviewed for their perspectives of key issues in Fawkner.

This process will be repeated in 2021.



The Merri Health team surveying residents at the Fawkner Festa

Community Leadership

Fundamental to Merri Health's place-based approach in Fawkner is the aim to enable and support community leaders to take action in their communities.

As part of our engagement strategy, we established an [online newsletter](#) (217 subscribers) and community register (347 contacts).

We have also sought, supported and secured additional funding for community-led initiatives in Fawkner, including a significant investment for a three-year initiative called 'Hello, Fawkner!' (see below).

Hello, Fawkner!

Funded through the Australian Government Department of Social Services, this project is a place-based approach to improving social cohesion in Fawkner.

The project will focus on building leadership capacity of local residents to develop and implement initiatives that bring community members together.

Key activities include:

- leadership training
- Harmony Day activities
- a 'Very Small Grants' program
- a community newspaper
- place-making

Hello, Fawkner! is a partnership initiative with [CoDesign Studio](#).

The Community Grocer

The Community Grocer Fawkner aims to foster community cohesion, skills development, employment pathways and local leadership through a weekly community market.

Now in its third year, the Grocer is entering a significant phase of transition where the management will transfer to [The Community Grocer](#).

A detailed case study is included on page 18.

Urdu Women's Group

The Urdu women's group is a weekly social gathering at the Fawkner community house. It's a central point for women who are newly arrived in Melbourne to connect with each other and with local services.

Over the past two years, we've also focused on building leadership capacity within the group. Thirteen women have now completed leadership training.

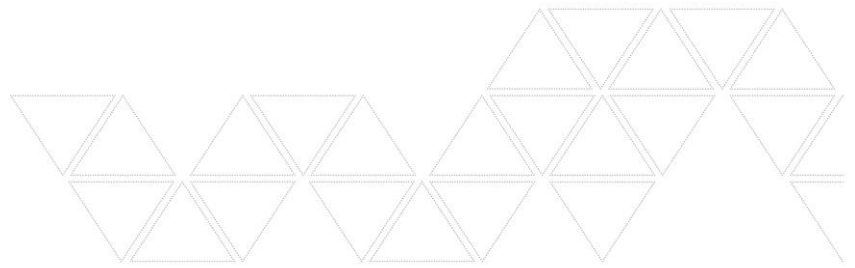
Planning is now underway to establish a board of management to help oversee future sustainability of the group.

Count Me In

Count Me In is a sports participation program that supports children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to participate in mainstream sport clubs.

Recognised by VicHealth as an award winner for building health through sports in 2017, Count Me In is a partnership project with the [University of Melbourne](#) and a range of community partners.

A detailed case study is included on page 24.



Ready Set Prep

Ready Set Prep is a four-year, collective impact approach to improving school readiness, family engagement and transition processes in schools and early childhood services in Fawkner.

So far, we've engaged all five primary schools in Fawkner, along with five kindergartens, four playgroups, maternal and child health, and other local early years services.

School-based initiatives

Beyond school readiness and family engagement, we have also supported schools in Fawkner to adopt a [health promoting schools framework](#) to improve health and wellbeing across a range of areas.

Projects include:

- an active travel project with Fawkner Primary School (see detailed case study on page 28)
- action on sustainability at Moomba Park Primary School
- the Little Long Walk (see page 31)
- dental health screenings

This [short film](#) shows our approach to school partnerships, and some of our historical projects.

YGLAM Performing Arts

Operating for more than 20 years, YGLAM queer youth theatre and performing arts ensemble combines weekly peer support and skill development workshops, with large-scale public art.

This year was no exception, with a collaboration between YGLAM, Stand Out student groups across Moreland, local schools, Moreland Council and Victoria Police.

More than 400 students and community members came together for the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) to form The Peace Patrol.



Click the above image to access the film on Youtube

Glenroy

Community and stakeholder engagement

With a view to initiating a place-based approach in Glenroy before the end of the Integrated Health Promotion Strategic Plan 2017-2021, our intention this year was to increase our engagement of community members and stakeholders.

Due to staffing changes during this period, this work has not progressed as anticipated, particularly in relation to community engagement. However, action has been taken to strengthen relationships with settings in this area, including:

- two schools
- two sporting clubs
- two Aboriginal community-controlled organisations

We have also secured funding for one partnership project with The Long Walk Trust for Speak Up, Speak Out (see page 9 below for more information).

Healthy physical environments

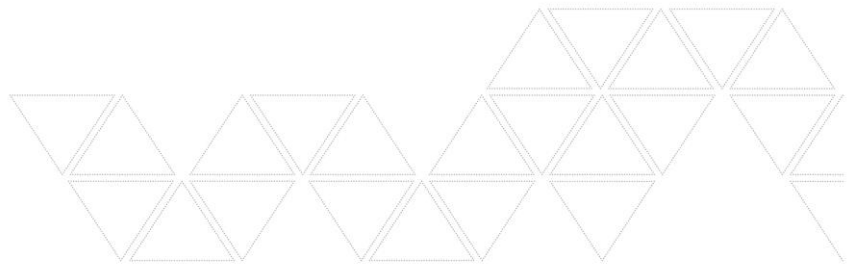
Merri Health has been an active participant in contributing to current consultations around the redevelopment of Ballerrt Mooroop. This site in Glenroy holds special significance for Wurundjeri people and the local Aboriginal community.

A consultant is currently working with Wurundjeri Council to engage widely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations, as well as local stakeholders, to develop a concept and proposal for the state government for a gathering place.

Our role has included advocating on behalf of Merri Health clients and the local Aboriginal community, and linking community members to the consultation process to ensure their voices are heard.



Primary and secondary schools



Schools

Gender equity

This year, we've worked closely with the Victorian Department of Education and Training to help schools in our area roll-out the [respectful relationships initiative](#).

There are three lead schools in Moreland: one secondary school, one primary school and one alternative education setting.

So far, the focus has been on building the foundations for whole-school approaches, including building a network of peers for reflection and collaboration through communities of practice, and setting up action teams within schools.

Coburg Primary

The collaboration with Coburg Primary School has focused on implementing a whole-school approach to health and wellbeing, with a particular focus on healthy eating.

Coburg Primary has made significant changes across a range of areas, and this has been outlined in a detailed case study on page 40.

Coburg North Primary

Having previously worked with Coburg North Primary School to implement a whole-school approach to improving mental wellbeing, our focus this past year was to build the capacity of the school to continue its great work without intensive support from our team.

Moreland Youth Movement

With the aim of increasing resilience and job readiness, the Moreland Youth Movement gave local secondary school students an opportunity to lead projects that tackled important issues in their local community.

VCAL students from Brunswick Secondary College had opportunities to develop new skills and improve their confidence through a project they designed around race-based discrimination (see a [short film](#) produced by the students below).

This was a partnership project with Moreland City Council and Brunswick Secondary College, and partly funded by VicHealth.



Click the above image to access the film on Youtube

Stand Out groups and the Alliance

Building on the achievements of previous years, we have continued our commitment to supporting student-led initiatives in local secondary schools.

A key focus this year has been consolidating the membership of Stand Out groups in four Moreland high schools. Stand Out groups are for students who want to take action to create safer and more inclusive schools for LGBTIAQ+ young people. There are now more than 80 young people engaged across these school groups.

Merri Health also developed a new partnership project with Moreland Council's Youth Services team to deliver a leadership program called 'The Alliance'. In addition to formal training delivered by Moreland Council, students also had the opportunity to form student action teams to target LGBTIAQ+ discrimination, race-based discrimination or gender inequality.

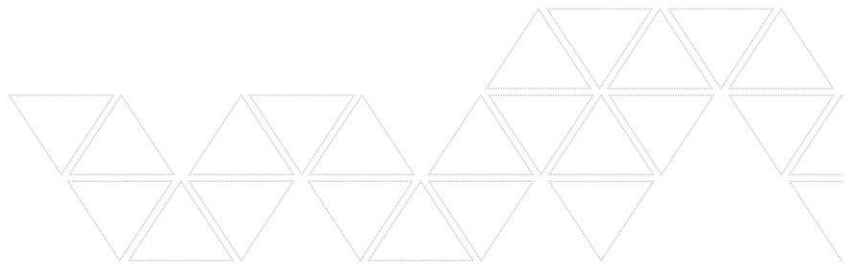
Stand Out MOREland

Funded by YACVic's HEY grants in 2016, Stand Out MOREland empowered young people to create safer and more inclusive schools and communities for LGBTIAQ+ young people.

A detailed case study is included on page 33.



Merri Health



Merri Health

Reconciliation Action Plan

Merri Health has completed its second [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) (RAP), which has been endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. We're proud of the efforts we've made to work towards closing the gap, and our commitment to continue this work over the coming years.

Our RAP committee drives action under this plan, comprising staff from seven different teams across the organisation, three representatives from Aboriginal community-controlled organisations, and one Aboriginal community member.

Merri Health's Koorie Community Engagement Officer supports teams across the organisation to improve the quality of engagement with and services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients. This year, they have led or supported a range of key projects, particularly initiatives supporting carers.

Koorie Carers Week Lunch

Led by the CarerLinks North team, this year's Koorie Carers Week Lunch saw more than 60 community members attend the Aborigines Advancement League.

With overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees, the event saw higher participation from community and Elders groups from the north-west region as a result of increased engagement with the service over the year.

Health and wellness education sessions

Led by CarerLinks North, a series of five health and wellness sessions were delivered to 38 community members. Informed by discussions with community, session topics covered techniques for self care and diabetes education.

NDIS information sessions

Following consultations with local Elders groups, Merri Health delivered information sessions and workshops with community members to help them prepare for accessing NDIS services.

Speak Up, Speak Out

As part of the Victorian Government's *Free from Violence* grant initiatives, Merri Health has been successful in receiving a grant in support of a partnership project with The Long Walk Trust.

Speak Up, Speak Out will explore the effectiveness of bystander training around healthy relationships with Aboriginal young people aged 10-12 years. The training will incorporate creative, play-based and cultural learning activities.

Smoking ceremony

As part of Reconciliation Week, Wurundjeri Elder Aunty Di Kerr performed a traditional Smoking Ceremony at the newest Merri Health site.

The ceremony held special significance, being the first time that a smoking has been performed on the grounds of the old Pentridge Prison site.



A traditional Smoking Ceremony held to open Merri Health's newest site

Gender equity

Since 2014, Merri Health has implemented a whole-of-organisational approach to preventing violence against women by promoting and embedding gender equity.

This project has reached an exciting stage, with Merri Health seeking to apply for accreditation with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency as an [Employer of Choice for Gender Equality](#) in 2018-19.

A detailed case study is included on page 42.

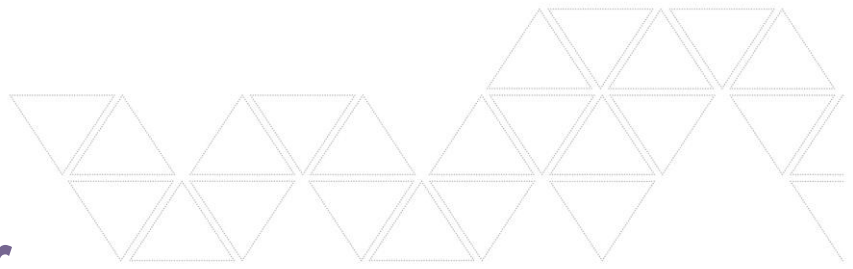
Communications

As part of our engagement with community members and stakeholders, we are working to improve the frequency of communication about projects under this strategy.

In the past year, we have published 24 stories on our projects in Merri Health reports and newsletters; we have posted 164 times on Facebook across five different social media pages; seen three articles published in the local paper; and one Channel 10 news report.



Our partnerships



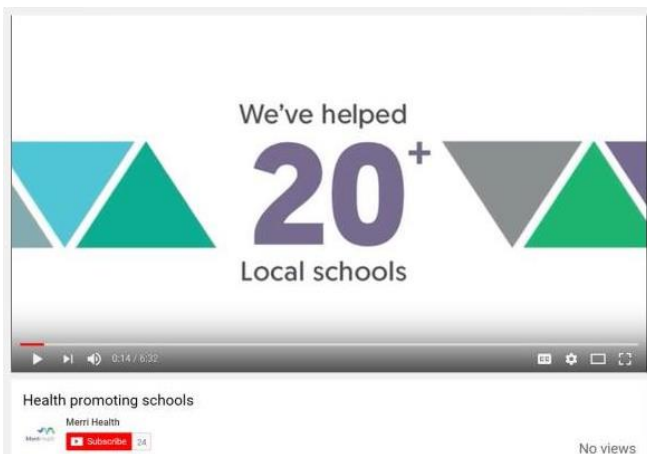
Working together

Networks & partnerships

Our work is firmly embedded in partnerships and collaboration, and this is evident across the projects detailed within this report.

Over this past year, we have engaged with more than 100 different partners, 25+ networks or committees, 10 teams across our organisation, and 10 different funders.

We asked our school partners about their experience working with Merri Health in this short film.



Click the above image to access the film on Youtube

Local government

Moreland City Council is a critical partner for this action plan. Our work directly meets with the [municipal public health and wellbeing plan](#) and its [Victorian counterpart](#), creating a transparent line-of-sight from state policy through to local action (Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, 2017).

Our collaboration spans almost 70 per cent of all projects delivered under this strategy in 2017-18, with different roles played by Council for each initiative.

For example, Moreland Council has committed significant human resources to four collaborative projects: Ready Set Prep and Word Play, the Moreland Youth Movement project, the Alliance and the Peace Patrol (YGLAM).

Moreland Council has also partly funded seven Merri Health projects; we have applied for funding together for three projects; and have supported each other's funding applications and award nominations for four projects.

Merri Health has participated in 10 Council-led networks, 4 consultations, and provided 2 formal submissions to Council policies and strategies.

We have strong, productive relationships with six departments across Moreland Council, and are committed to continuing to strengthen these over the coming years.

Regional partnerships

As part of our Integrated Health Promotion Strategic Plan 2017-2021, we have continued our commitment to working with regional partners on shared priorities.

In 2017, we recommitted our participation in the [Building a Respectful Community](#) partnership led by Women's Health in the North (WHIN). We are proud to work alongside WHIN, community health organisations, local government and other organisations in the northern metropolitan region to prevent violence against women in our community.

Merri Health has also continued its commitment to working with the Inner North West Primary Care Partnership (INWPCP) on our shared priority around social inclusion. We are an active member of the INWPCP's governance group, prevention alliance, access and equity alliance, and Koolin Balit partnership.

We are also involved in the INWPCP's initiatives to develop shared measurement tools to strengthen monitoring and evaluation practice for preventing violence against women and social inclusion initiatives.

Merri Health has also been chosen to participate in a new pilot project with the INWPCP to evaluate the [From Symbols to Systems framework](#); a toolkit to improve cultural security for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff working in mainstream organisation.



WHIN's Building a Respectful Community partnership

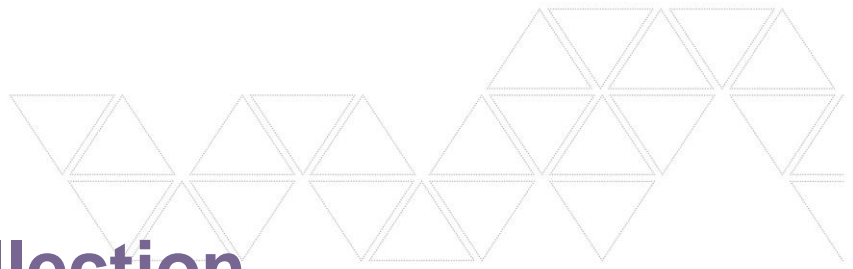
Resourcing prevention

We firmly believe that increasing funding and resources for primary prevention initiatives should be a key focus of our work.

In the past year, we've secured an additional \$600,000 for our partnership projects over the next three years.



Case studies



Baseline data collection

A snapshot of the Fawkner community, through surveys and stakeholder interviews

Introduction

Merri Health's Community Wellbeing program area has identified three health priorities for Moreland for the years 2017-2021, including preventing violence against women, social inclusion, and access to affordable and nutritious food.

Fawkner has been chosen as the suburb where we will direct a significant amount of resources to deliver a 'place-based' approach.

In order to influence the chosen priorities, Merri Health will focus its work around specific 'determinants of health' including social inclusion, social cohesion, employment, civic participation, volunteering, and education preparedness/attainment.

This case study is designed to:

- provide the results of a community survey undertaken between November 2017 and January 2018, which measured the current or 'baseline' status of these key health determinants
- provide a summary of stakeholder interviews undertaken over the same period of time

The survey

The 'Fawkner Community Survey' was undertaken between November 2017 and January 2018.

The survey contained 24 questions relating to:

- Demographics - including age, gender, and languages spoken
- Determinants of health - including social inclusion, social cohesion, employment, civic participation, volunteering, and educational preparedness/attainment
- Community assets and visioning - including what people like and would like to change about living in Fawkner

The survey was available to residents through an online format (Survey Monkey) as well as hard copy.

Online surveys were distributed via social media (Facebook), and the community newsletter 'Hello, Fawkner!'.

Hard copies of the survey were distributed by Merri staff at a number of local community events and locations such as:

- The Fawkner Festa
- The Community Grocer
- 'Prep orientation' days at schools
- Fawkner Leisure Centre
- Bonwick Street shops

Results

In total, 254 surveys were completed by Fawkner residents.

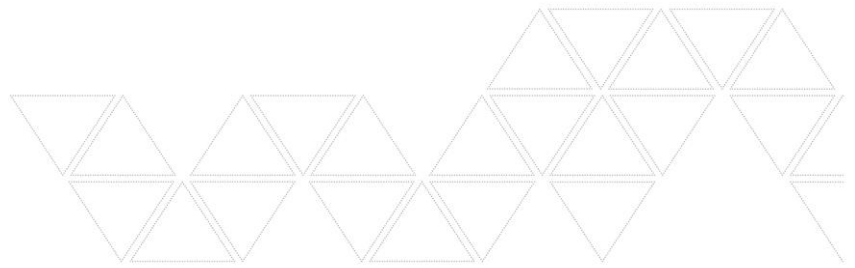
1. Limitations

Limitations of the data include:

- The large majority of respondents (72.31%) were female
- A low number of residents over the age of 55 (19.10%)
- Challenges reaching isolated people who may not attend events or have access to online surveys
- Challenges reaching residents with low levels of spoken/written English



The Merri Health team surveying community members at the Fawkner Festa



2. Demographics

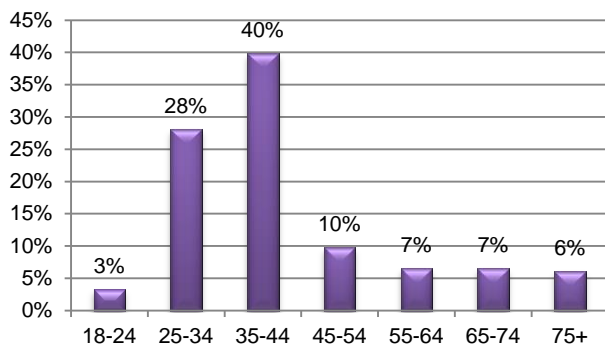
a. Sex/gender

Respondents were asked to nominate their sex or gender.

- Female: 72.31%
- Male: 27.27%
- Other (could be specified): 0.41%

b. Age

Participants were asked to nominate their age (graph below).



c. Languages spoken

Participants were asked to nominate their languages spoken.

This was an optional question, and collected qualitatively. 50% of participants chose to answer this question. Of those participants, the following languages were identified:

- English: 80.00%
- Urdu: 33.84%
- Arabic: 10.77%
- Italian: 6.15%

Many people indicated that they spoke more than one language, e.g. English and Urdu. Other languages spoken include Tamil, Vietnamese, Hindi, Tamil, Pasto, Assyrian, Dutch, Sicilian, Malaysian, Bengali, Auslan, Tagalog, Somali, Turkish, Punjabi, Chaldean and Dari.

d. Length of time living in Fawkner

Participants were asked the length of time they had lived in Fawkner.

- Less than 1 year: 14.57%
- 1-5 years: 35.83%
- 6-10 years: 14.96%
- 11 years or more: 34.65%

3. Health status

The data below relates to several 'determinants of health', used here as indicators of social inclusion, gender equity, access to affordable and nutritious food.

'Self-reported health' has also been included as a source of comparison for future surveys, as well as for comparison with other indicators.

a. Self-reported health

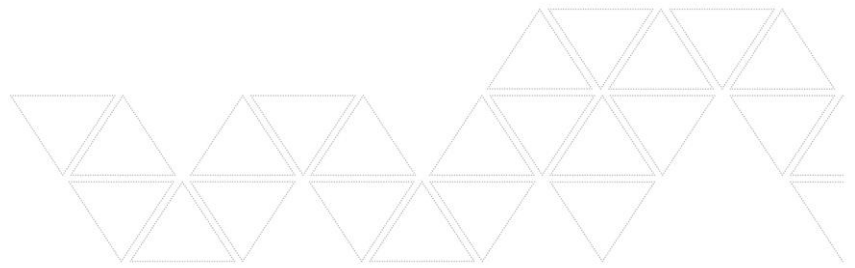
- Very poor: 1.57%
- Somewhat poor: 3.94%
- Neither poor nor good: 15.75%
- Somewhat good: 48.03%
- Very good: 30.71%

Overall 78.86% of participants rated their health (including physical and emotional) as either 'somewhat good' or 'very good'.

b. Social inclusion

The results below provide an indication of social inclusion in Fawkner.

- 66.80% of respondents agreed that they feel like a valued member of the Fawkner community.
 - o 9.88% disagreed
 - o 23.32% neither agreed nor disagreed
- 86.95% of respondents agreed that they feel 'at home' in Fawkner.
 - o 7.91% disagreed
 - o 5.14% neither agreed nor disagreed
- 76.59% agreed that they know their neighbours.
 - o 11.91% disagreed
 - o 11.51% neither agreed nor disagreed
- 79.60% of respondents indicated that there is someone outside their household who they could rely on to take care of them or their family in an emergency.
- 51% of respondents indicated that they belong to an organised group in Fawkner, such as a social group, school, Mosque, Church, arts or political group.
- 72.40% of respondents indicated that in the past 12 months they have attended a community event or celebration in Fawkner.
- 71.49% of respondents indicated that in the past week, they have had a conversation with a fellow Fawkner community member who wasn't related to them.



c. Social cohesion

The results below provide an indication of the status of social cohesion in Fawkner.

- 66.93% of respondents agreed that people in Fawkner can be trusted.
 - o 7.17% disagreed
 - o 25.90% neither agreed nor disagreed
- 72.40% of respondents agreed that people in Fawkner are willing to help their neighbours.
 - o 7.60% disagreed
 - o 20% neither agreed nor disagreed
- 87.65% of respondents agreed that they feel safe walking alone during the day.
 - o 5.18% disagreed
 - o 7.17% neither agreed nor disagreed
- 52.59% agreed that they feel safe walking alone after dark.
 - o 25.89% disagreed
 - o 21.51% neither agreed nor disagreed
- 76.40% of respondents agreed that multiculturalism in Fawkner definitely makes their life better.
 - o 15.20% neither agreed nor disagreed
 - o 8.40% disagreed
- 82.73% of respondents agreed that they would be happy if someone from a different culture or religion lived next door to them.
 - o 6.83% disagreed
 - o 10.44% neither agreed nor disagreed

"It has diversity and I feel at home, I came here and it does not feel as though I have left home"

"Fawkner is different now. Different people have moved in and it's all changed. I don't like the new arrivals. They are different."

"I love the diversity of Fawkner, and the fact that my kids play like its 1982. I love that the Europeans planted beautiful fruit trees 50 odd years ago and we get to reap the rewards of that."

d. Employment

The results below provide an indication of 'employment' in Fawkner.

- 49.60% of respondents indicated they are currently employed (including self-employed).
- Of those who were employed, 88.62% said they were satisfied with their current employment.
- Of those who were employed, 35% said they were currently seeking to increase how much they work.
- Of those who were not employed, 55.74% said they would prefer to be employed (60.44% females, 39.56% males*).
- Of those who were not employed, 52.14% of respondents said that they do not feel they have access to the job opportunities they would like (56.82% females, 43.48% of males*)

e. Civic participation

The results below provide an indication of the status of civic participation in Fawkner.

- 29.32% of respondents indicated that in the past 12 months, they had attended a community or Council meeting in Fawkner.
- 30.24% of respondents indicated that in the past 12 months, they had participated in a community activity in Fawkner, such as a working bee, community project or organising group.

f. Volunteering

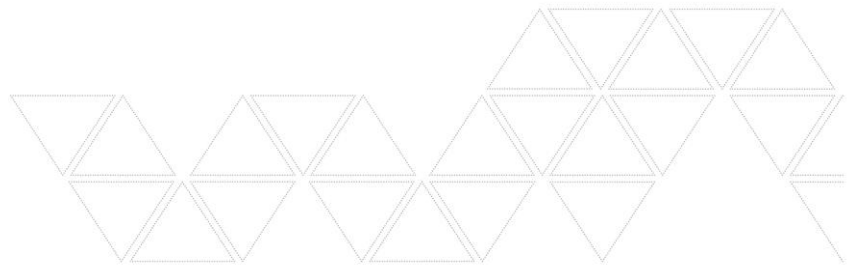
- 39.68% of respondents said that in the past 12 months they have participated in voluntary or unpaid work (42.77% females, 32.81% males*)

g. Education (preparedness and attainment)

The results below provide an indication of the status of educational preparedness and attainment in Fawkner.

- 87.80% of respondents indicated that they had completed high-school or similar.
- 27.87% of respondents indicated that they are currently studying, either formally or informally (30% females, 20.31% males*)
- 80.33% of respondents indicated that they have access to the study/education opportunities they would like.

** Note: Sex/gender statistics have been provided where results were considered particularly interesting or significant. Not all respondents answered every question, and not all respondents nominated their sex/gender.*



4. Community assets & visioning

a. Community assets

We asked survey respondents 'What do you like most about living in Fawkner?'

Common themes included:

- Community feel / close-knit community / 'small-town feel'
- Peace and quiet
- Safety / lack of crime
- Diversity / multiculturalism
- Convenience / amenities, e.g. public transport, access to the city, social activities, sports, cricket club and pool, schools/kindergartens, shops, airport, library, playgrounds, university, ring road, doctor, Mosque, halal food, child care, classes at community house, good food/restaurants
- Environment, e.g. Merri Creek, birds, fruit trees
- Affordability / house prices



This mural by artist Tom Garrard features local houses in Fawkner, and is located next to the Post Office on Bonwick St

b. Visioning

We asked survey respondents 'If there was something about Fawkner you could change, what would it be?'

Common themes included:

- Traffic / speeding vehicles / parking / better bus/tram routes
- Rubbish in streets and parks
- Improvements to community facilities e.g. parklands, open space (including Merri Creek), playgrounds, shopping strips, footpaths/streets, signage

- Better cafes, restaurants, shops, bars
- More opportunities to be involved in community, including events / activities
- Better utilisation of unused spaces/shops
- The 'toxic site on McBryde St'
- Friendlier community
- More opportunities for different cultures to mix
- More affordable housing / Less units
- Arabic language classes in schools
- More job opportunities

Stakeholder interviews

Merri Health staff undertook three stakeholder interviews in order to gather local knowledge from people who work with the Fawkner community.

Interviewees included:

- Meredith Lawrence – Coordinator, Fawkner Community House
- William Coogan - Acting Manager Social Development, Moreland City Council
- Fawkner Service Providers Network - including representatives from Salvation Army, Merri Health, Moreland City Council, Fawkner Community House, Fawkner Library, a local high school and Melbourne City Mission

Overall, conversations were very positive about Fawkner as a place to live. Interviews reflected a changed, and changing Fawkner community, and an overarching tension between wanting a 'better' reputation for Fawkner, and perceived problems that change (particularly gentrification) brings to communities.

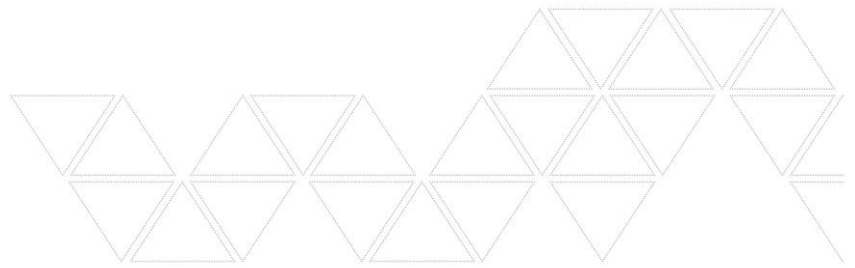
A summary of these interviews is provided below.

Note: The information is not considered or intended to be factually accurate, rather an interpretation of conversations.

a. Population change / gentrification

Conversations reflected Fawkner as a highly diverse community, with population changes, as well as 'gentrification' being prominent themes across all interviews.

Interviewees described a noticeable shift in the demographic of people moving to Fawkner, with less Urdu speaking people moving in, replaced by middle class families, and 'people who like to sit in cafes and take pictures of their food'.



One interviewee indicated that currently Fawkner is experiencing the 'first wave' of gentrification, but it would be the 'second wave' who will be the challenge, as these people will engage less in existing community activities.

'Older migrants' (presumably largely those who migrated from Italy post World War II) were mentioned as a key population group, alongside 'new migrants' and the 'new middle-class'. Overall this group was discussed very little, however one interviewee believed that with 'older generations' passing away, there is a need for increased intergenerational activities to promote sharing of skills and stories.

b. House prices

Increasing house prices in Fawkner was a topic of much discussion, as both a by-product, and cause, of gentrification.

Interviewees said increasing house prices are a reason that people who would have bought in Coburg are now buying in Fawkner.

It was also believed that people who were buying in Fawkner, are now 'not buying'/'moving out' of Fawkner, and instead moving north to Hume.

c. Shift in energy

Interviewees talked about a 'shift in energy', over recent years, with Muslim residents becoming increasingly empowered within the Fawkner community. People interviewed described "more positivity", "less racism", "fresh energy", and increased social behaviour between Muslim and non-Muslim community members - such as people saying "hello" in the street, where this would not previously have been the case.

d. Rebranding

Interviewees indicated interest in 'rebranding' Fawkner as a more desirable suburb to live in. They discussed interest in exploring opportunities to boost 'community pride and culture' in Fawkner, and create welcoming places for people to be.

Interviews reflected an opinion that Fawkner is seen as a place where community members from other suburbs could access services such as the Neighbourhood House.

Next steps

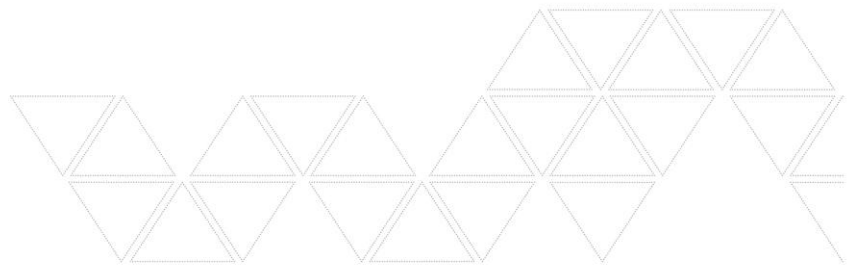
The following steps were taken after completing this process.

- Survey findings were shared with relevant stakeholders, such as Moreland City Council, relevant Merri Health staff and teams, survey respondents and Fawkner Neighbourhood House
- Findings of 'vision' related questions were further analysed and used to inform the Integrated Health Promotion Strategic Plan 2017-2021

The Fawkner Community Survey will be undertaken in January 2021 as part of the evaluation framework attached to the Integrated Health Promotion Strategic Plan 2017-2021.



Mutton Reserve, Fawkner



The Community Grocer Fawkner

Addressing food security in Moreland's north by improving access to fresh foods

Introduction

Merri Health has identified food security and food access as significant determinants influencing people's capacity to eat healthy and nutritious food. Food security refers to the ability of all people to regularly access healthy, affordable, culturally appropriate and safe food without the use of emergency food relief (Merri Health, 2015).

A key goal of Merri Health's *Integrated Health Promotion (IHP) Plan 2013-2017 and 2017-2021* is to strengthen the local food system and improve food security in Moreland by promoting healthy eating, specifically for communities that experience higher health inequity.

This case study provides an overview of The Community Grocer Fawkner project; a weekly community run fresh fruit and vegetable market offering affordable, high quality produce in Fawkner to improve accessibility to fresh, healthy food and increase diversity in the local food system.

Project overview

The Community Grocer Fawkner (TCGF) is a weekly low cost, high quality fruit and vegetable market that runs every Wednesday from 9.00am–12.30pm at CB Smith Reserve, Fawkner.

TCGF aims to:

- Improve access to fresh fruit and vegetables in Fawkner
- Provide affordable, high quality fruit and vegetables to Fawkner residents
- Provide volunteering opportunities



Quick Facts

Years implemented:

Nov 2015 – October 2018 (anticipated completion)

What is it?

- A weekly low cost fruit and vegetable market providing fresh, high quality, affordable produce to the Fawkner community
- Provides volunteering opportunities for locals

Reach

- 62 volunteers
- 10,928 transactions including 252 home deliveries

Key stakeholders and partners:

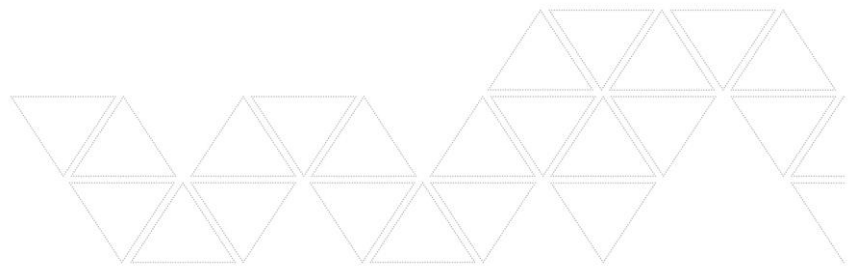
- The Community Grocer
- Moreland City Council
- Merri Health service providers
- Fawkner Community House
- Fawkner Leisure Centre
- Fawkner Service Providers Network

Key achievements

- 124 markets held
- \$180,547.44 worth of produce sold
- Recruitment of market manager and market assistant
- 2016 finalist for Minister of Health Volunteer Awards

Challenges

- Volunteer retention is an ongoing issue. Many volunteers are university students and work at TCGF to gain skills in public health and community development.
- Customer demand is often unpredictable with school holidays, weather often impacting sales
- Staff turnover has made it difficult for the project to gain momentum over time and has resulted in additional time being spent orienting new staff to the project
- Introduction of a plastic free market divided customers, with some choosing not to return



Project activities

Phase 1: July 2014 – June 2015 **Needs assessment and planning**

A needs assessment was completed in 2015 and highlighted that food security and food access continue to be significant issues within the suburb of Fawkner. From 2011 to 2013, the percentage of people who did run out of food in the last 12 months and could not afford to buy more greatly increased in Fawkner, from 5.6% in 2011 to 11.4% in 2013 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

Emergency food relief centres within Fawkner were at capacity and only able to operate on a weekly basis due to funding constraints.

The food supply is centred around major shopping strips, which makes it difficult for the 12% of residents who do not have a motor vehicle to walk to the shops (Merri Health, 2015).

Literature and stakeholder consultation found that Fawkner is one of the most disadvantaged suburbs in Melbourne (Merri Health, 2015).

Fawkner was chosen as a key setting within Moreland to implement a food security project.

Phase 2: July 2015 – February 2016 **Project planning and pilot period**

Project Planning July 2015-October 2015

A literature scan was undertaken to look at settings based food security projects that could be replicated in Fawkner with a focus on food access.

The Community Grocer Carlton was identified as a potential model that could be replicated in Fawkner. Merri Health saw the model as an innovative and exciting way to help improve food security and social connections in Fawkner.

A strong working relationship was formed and Fawkner was chosen as the second Community Grocer site. This relationship was solidified with a formal partnership agreement between the Community Grocer and Merri Health.

Led by a health promotion officer, planning commenced to set up the Fawkner site with guidance from Merri Health staff around facilities, finances, volunteers and communications. Local stakeholders were also consulted, including Moreland Council, Fawkner Leisure Centre, Fawkner Community House and the Fawkner Service Providers Network.



Pilot Period November 2015 – February 2016

The first TCGF market ran in November 2015. Markets were regularly staffed by the health promotion officer and a team of volunteers, with support from other Merri Health staff when required.

Over the pilot period, TCGF was received exceptionally well by the Fawkner community with an average of 100 customers attending each week during the pilot period.

Initially, unsold produce was brought back to Merri Health offices for sale to staff, until partnerships were established with local food relief agencies who were happy to receive donations.

TCGF received wide media coverage on SBS World News and RRR community radio.

A customer survey was completed in December 2015, with all 29 customers reporting that the market has made buying fresh fruit and vegetables easier for them and that they would recommend the market to their family and friends.

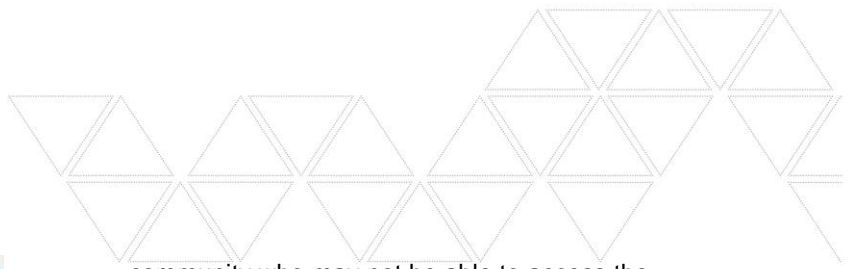
Of the 29 customers surveyed, 28 reported that they were happy with the prices and everyone said that they were happy with the quality of the produce.

A decision was made to extend the project beyond the pilot period.

Phase 3: March 2016 – June 2017 **Consolidation**

In March 2016, a market manager was hired to manage the day-to-day market operations. This enabled the health promotion officer to shift their involvement in the project from ordering and pricing, towards promotion, partnerships and evaluation.

With new staff on-board, the post-pilot period represented a time of consolidation and adaptation of the market model to best suit the context.



Click image to see film

However, during this period the initiative experienced significant staffing changes in the health promotion officer, market manager and team leader roles due to a range of unforeseen circumstances. The market, its staff and volunteers responded exceptionally well, despite the disruptions.

The Community Grocer model relies heavily on volunteer support. Seen as an opportunity to build the skills and confidence of local people, market sites are encouraged to engage residents from the local area in these roles. TCGF has successfully engaged more than 31 volunteers since commencement. However, maintaining a consistent number of volunteers each week has been a key challenge. Positively, many volunteers move onto paid employment opportunities and this is seen as a key achievement of TCGF.

To better support the market manager, a paid market assistant role was established in December 2016. This role solely supports market-day operations. The role was promoted amongst existing TCGF volunteers, with the role successfully appointed to a volunteer.

TCGF also trialed a few initiatives with a local primary school, including two pop-up markets during school pick-up in late 2016 and a staff mystery box program. These trials were of mixed success, with engagement from school staff identified as a barrier.

Further, TCGF volunteers were finalists for the Minister of Health Volunteer Awards 2016.

Phase 4: June 2017 – Dec 2017

Towards financial sustainability

In the second half of 2017, TCGF trialed different initiatives with the aim of improving the market's financial sustainability.

Key strategies include:

- Reducing leftover, unsold produce by on-selling to local organisations and Merri Health staff
- Seeking grant funding to support expansion

A delivery service was also trialed, with the aim of reaching isolated members of the Fawkner

community who may not be able to access the market, particularly due to mobility issues.

Market highlights 2015–2018

Indicator	Result	Period
Average number of customers/week	85	2017-18 financial year
<i>For comparison:</i>		
– 2016-2017	97	
– 2015-2016	69	
Customers that attend the market weekly	48%	March 2018*
Customers who live less than 1km from the market	73%	March 2018*
Customers who travelled less than 10 minutes to get to market	72%	April 2017
Customers identifying as low income	56%	March 2018*
Percentage of produce at TCGF that was the cheapest available in Fawkner	71%	March 2018*
Customers feeling a sense of community and inclusion	90%	March 2018*
Amount of leftover produce donated to local food relief agencies	\$4,948	2017-18 financial year

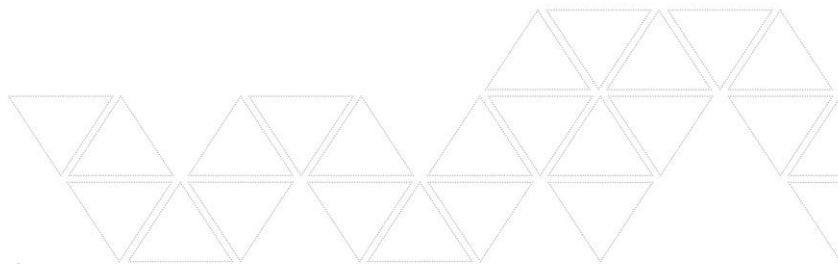
*These highlights are taken from the Monash University student evaluation (see Attachment A) and the weekly market log.

Phase 5: January 2018 – December 2018 Transition

Inspired by the market assistant at Fawkner, the introduction of a plastic free Fawkner market was presented gradually over 6 months, and implemented on 1st January 2018 using the following initiatives:

- Educational posters and signs encouraging customers to bring their own bags
- Offering free boomerang bags
- Cardboard boxes and sustainably sourced brown paper bags
- Limiting the amount of produce ordered that is wrapped in plastic

TCGF was a leader in the plastic free movement, and prompted other Community Grocer sites at Carlton, Fitzroy and Flemington to replicate this initiative.



The implementation of a plastic free market received mixed reviews. Anecdotal evidence included:

- 'I will no longer shop at the market due to the plastic bags not being available'
- 'It's too hard to carry in one large box'

This correlates to a decrease in customer numbers, from an average of 95 in June 2017 to 85 in June 2018. Of interest to note, in July 2018, two major Australian supermarkets; Coles and Woolworths, chose to ban single use lightweight plastic bags, with many smaller chain supermarkets and food stores following suit. The Community Grocer will continue to seek feedback and track customer trends, as the banning of single use plastic bags and reusable bags becomes normalised.

Following a successful trial period from July 2017 to October 2017, TCGF has implemented a home delivery service to increase access to the markets high quality, affordable produce for members of the community that may be socially isolated, living with mobility issues or unable to attend the market due to work or other commitments. Each week, a survey monkey questionnaire reaches 132 community members, and on average, 5 customers living in Fawkner, Pascoe Vale, Coburg and Coburg North receive deliveries to their door weekly. The delivery service has provided 252 mystery fruit and vegetable boxes thus far.

Feedback

Customer Feedback

Students from Monash University completed evaluations of the Fawkner and Carlton sites in April and May of 2017 (Sacks, Braun, Feben, & Gill, 2017) and of Fawkner, Flemington, Carlton and Fitzroy sites in March 2018⁶.

Focus group participants – staff and volunteers from Merri Health and partner organisations – reported seeing a range of social, health and career benefits related to TCGF, including:

- The market has grown, the comments you hear about the quality of the produce, 'oh it's this cheap!' 'is that all this costs me? That's great!'
- In Fawkner there's lots of different cultures and I think people respect each other.
- Most customers have mentioned how good the quality it is, how cheap it is. They are in the morning waiting in queues showing they are eager to eat the food.

- The market is about access to fresh healthy produce. And the type of produce, for example, lots of Pakistani families use okra, and they provide that because it is a common food used. Being responsive to the community needs, and the location provides good access and affordability.
- I don't drive so the convenience of the market is quite essential.

Staff and Volunteer Feedback

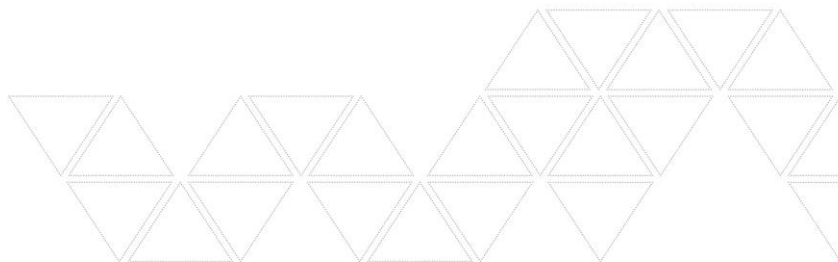
A questionnaire was provided to the Market Manager, Market Assistant and volunteers at the Fawkner site in July 2018. Below is a summary of their feedback:

- Volunteering here really makes me happy, its good the area has been identified so we can promote healthy eating and affordable food to this community
- I've gained confidence from marketing, managing a team of volunteers, computer skills, learning about different produce, what benefits the produce has, formed new relationships with the supplier, I'm more confident and happy to be challenged
- Being a part of the grocer gets me out and involved, I get to meet other volunteers and other people with the same interests as me
- My family are eating a lot healthier
- I've had customers bring me food they have cooked
- I enjoy chatting with the regular customers and being a part of the community

"The market has grown, the comments you hear about the quality of the produce, 'oh it's this cheap!' 'is that all this costs me? That's great!'"

In Fawkner there's lots of different cultures and I think people respect each other.

"Most customers have mentioned how good the quality it is, how cheap it is. They are in the morning waiting in queues showing they are eager to eat the food."



IT'S MORE THAN JUST A MARKET...



Key supporters

Integral to the success of the project has been the partnership between Merri Health and The Community Grocer, whom have provided branding, social media platforms, the franchise model and evaluations as completed by Monash University students. This key partnership has produced a strong foundation for the Fawkner franchise, and will ensure continued progression and success after the transition of management to The Community Grocer.

Support from the following teams within Merri Health: finance, facilities, communications, volunteering, reception and allied health have also been instrumental in the set up and continual success of the project.

We would like to acknowledge the support of the Fawkner Leisure Centre for assisting with storage and promotion for the grocer and Fawkner Community House, Fawkner Primary School, John Fawkner College, Fawkner Service Providers Network and the Fawkner Library for promoting the grocer. Local business The Fork Shop and Fawkner Kebab House for their purchase of produce and the Hope Café that ensures the donation of surplus stock is utilised to feed those in need. The following stall holders have also provided a positive contribution the Fawkner market; Beeswax Eco food wraps, StoryCycle, Second Stitch and Sustainable Fawkner for providing reusable boomerang bags.

Lastly, TCGF would like to acknowledge the residents of Fawkner and the Moreland community, for whom inspired the project and for whom continually motivate the TCGF to progress and strengthen the local food system, build community connection and foster local enterprise and social empowerment.

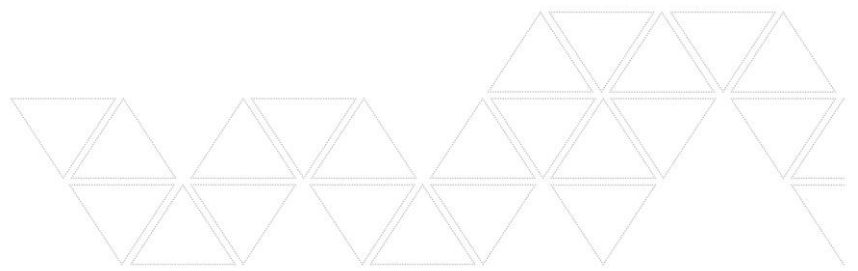
Future activities

TCGF has proven an important asset to Fawkner community life, providing a space that supports community inclusion, volunteering opportunities and healthy eating.

To ensure this initiative continues to benefit the Moreland community, Merri Health and The Community Grocer have made a joint decision to transition the market management to The Community Grocer, to support The Community Grocer's growth, and allow TCGF to benefit from new systems and processes that support the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of all markets run by The Community Grocer across Melbourne. This includes embedding The Community Grocers new strategic directions, that aim to address the four overarching themes of food insecurity including access, availability, utilisation and community connections using a unified approach across all current markets.

Merri Health will remain an active partner, providing in-kind support in terms of the use of existing facilities and storage space, equipment, and also coverage of costs associated with existing permits.

The Community Grocer will continue to provide Fawkner customers with a plastic free market, and aims to extend its focus on sustainability with the implementation of a "Pedal Powered Produce" delivery system. A mystery box pick-up point will also be provided to customers that are unable to attend the market during running hours, and who do not live in the delivery zone.

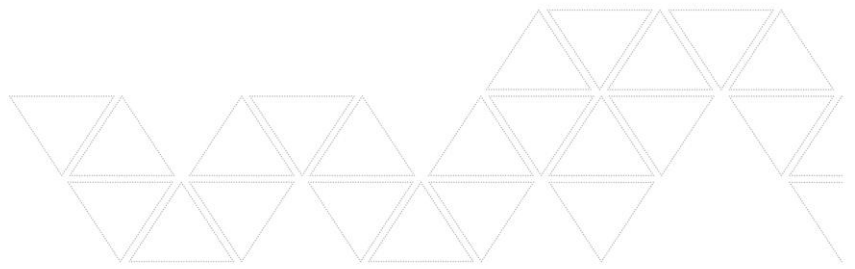


Attachment A: Monash University impact evaluation infographic

In April 2018, four students from Monash University undertook an Impact Evaluation of four of the Carlton, Fawkner, Fitzroy and Flemington markets.

Below is a summary of the evaluation findings.





AVAILABILITY

58 different fruits and vegetables are available at the Fitzroy & Carlton markets

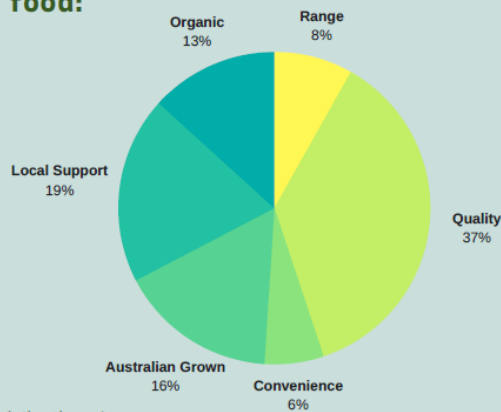


85% felt the variety of produce available allows them to purchase the produce they want



66% less expensive than supermarkets
71% less expensive than all retailers within 1km

Most important aspect when buying food:*



*other than price

"You just literally get your money's worth and it's good quality"

- Carlton Market Customer

95% of customers described the quality of produce as **GOOD** or **VERY GOOD**

UTILISATION

Since attending the market, 63% of customers saw an increase in their fruit and vegetable intake



"It made cooking more exciting"

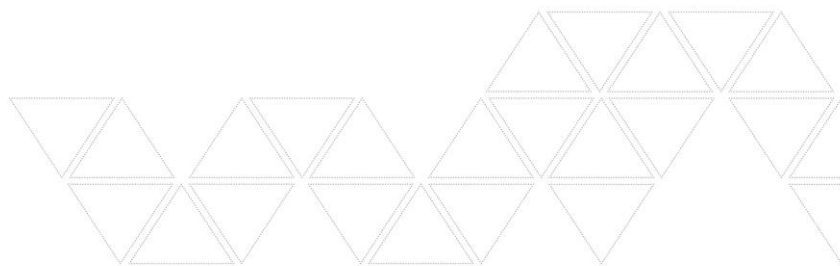
- Carlton Market Customer

"People tell you how they cook it ... you give it a shot and you really just, like you taste it, the other cultures ... it's really amazing to be able to bring that home with you"

- Flemington Market Customer



9 in 10 customers felt the selection of produce available allowed them to cook culturally appropriate meals



Count Me In

Fostering community cohesion through sport

Introduction

Count Me In is a sports participation program targeting children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Although sport is the vehicle for change, at its core, CMI aims to improve social inclusion and wellbeing for refugee and migrant families, and strengthen community cohesion. It does this by supporting families to engage with mainstream sporting clubs.

This case study provides an overview of the project and activities undertaken between July 2016-June 2018.

Project overview

Count Me In is a sports participation program that supports children and young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds to join mainstream sports clubs.

Count Me In's objectives aim to create change across the socio-ecological model:

Individuals

- Increase mental and physical health, resilience, sense of belonging and community connection
- Broaden social networks
- Improve access to community resources

Families

- Broaden community networks and sense of community connection
- Improve access to community resources

Organisations (sports clubs)

- Increase participation rates and cultural diversity
- Increase cultural competence and capacity to accommodate different needs

Community

- Increased community connectedness
- Increased social cohesion

Policy

- Improved evidence base to inform policy
- Guidelines for sports governing bodies, local and state governments

Quick Facts

Years implemented

July 2016 to June 2018 (ongoing)

What is it?

- A sports participation program targeting families from migrant and refugee backgrounds
- Children and young people are supported to join mainstream sporting clubs

Reach

277 child and youth participants
33% of participants are female
58 adult women participants
165 families
16 sports clubs and their participants

Key partners

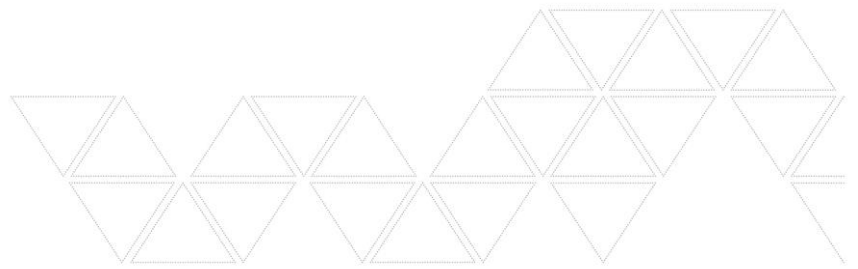
University of Melbourne
Moreland Council
Arabic Welfare
Hume City Council
Centre for Multicultural Youth
Fawkner Primary School
Badminton Victoria
VicHealth
Sporting clubs

Key achievements

- 2017 VicHealth award recipient for Building Health through Sports
- Badminton program for women and girls established as an additional activity based on the interests of the local community. 90 people have participated so far.

Challenges

- Maintaining communication with families and ensuring they remain engaged with the clubs



Project activities

Project team

Count Me In employs bicultural/bilingual Community Support Coordinators representing the main language groups in Moreland and Hume.

The role is to promote the benefits of sports to families, assist with registration, facilitate communication between clubs and families, and 'troubleshoot' transport issues by helping to organise carpooling.

Partnership development

Partnerships were established with sports clubs in Moreland and Hume. These clubs were supported with resources, training and ongoing communication to increase their capacity to provide a culturally welcoming and appropriate environment and experience to refugee and migrant children and their families. At times, sports clubs made changes or adaptations to make their programs more accessible, including providing fee subsidies when needed.

Partnerships were also established with local community-based organisations to support project planning and implementation. This includes a Steering Committee, which meets quarterly.

Family engagement

More than 165 families were engaged in Count Me In between July 2016-June 2018.

Community Support Coordinators work with families to identify their sports interests and capacity, and are then linked with sporting clubs that meet their needs in the local area.

Badminton

Alongside support for children, a badminton program was established for women and girls to provide a culturally safe space for those who did not feel comfortable playing sport in a mixed gender environment.

More than 90 participants have participated in this initiative:

- 32 girls (Fawkner)
- 43 women (Fawkner and Oak Park)
- 15 women (Craigieburn)

This initiative was a partnership with Badminton Victoria.



Click image to play short film from student, Iman Balla

Volunteering

Four volunteers have been engaged to support the project, with all of them being mothers of Count Me In participants.

These volunteers have been supported to access training through Merri Health and two attended the Diversity in Sport conference in 2017.

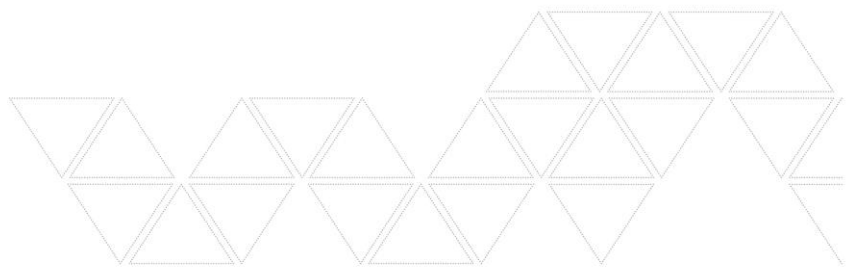
Funding

One grant application was submitted to support 'Count Me In Too' under the Victorian Government's Free from Violence funding (local government stream). This application proposed to trial an adaptation to Count Me In that solely focuses on initiatives to increase participation of refugee and migrant girls in mainstream sporting clubs.

Evaluation

Preliminary evaluation findings included 161 children aged 3–15 years. Results demonstrated participation in Count Me In significantly increased resilience ($p=0.047$) for the children, with a moderate positive correlation between resilience and wellbeing. A social network mapping exercise was also conducted and there was a decrease in children reporting that they had 'no- one' that they could talk to about things across the categories of 'kids at school', 'kids in the community', 'adults at school' and 'adults in the community'.

Count Me In has extended the social networks of participants, and children now feel they have people outside of the home to turn to for support. Interviews with stakeholders and focus groups with parents indicated that additional efforts were needed to improve communication between clubs and families, which is an ongoing focus to improve the program.



Despite this, parents and children were extremely positive about the program and were very positive about the support provided by their Community Support Coordinator.

Additional focus groups are due to be held in late 2018.

*“Me and my son...we made many friends here. We met new people from sport”
(parent)*

Future activities

This project is currently funded until December 2018.

- Funding applications have been submitted
- Significant potential to focus on girls and young women, with more of a gender equality focus
- Women who have participated in the Badminton sessions will be invited to undertake certified coaching training through Badminton Victoria in August 2018. In the future, Badminton sessions in Fawkner and Oak Park will be run by trained coaches from the local community

Key supporters

This project is a partnership between the University of Melbourne, Merri Health and other local partners.

In 2018, this project received funding from:

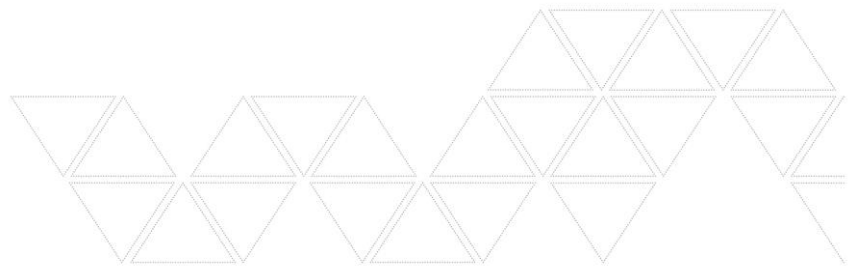
- VicHealth Research Innovation Fund
- Moreland City Council

This project also received in-kind support from:

- University of Melbourne
- Moreland City Council
- Arabic Welfare
- Hume City Council
- Centre for Multicultural Youth
- Fawkner Primary School
- Badminton Victoria

The following sports clubs have been engaged in the project:

- Haig Fawkner Cricket Club
- Northern Saints Football Club
- Hadfield Football Club
- Pascoe Vale Hadfield Cricket Club
- Preston YWC District Cricket Club
- Hadfield Netball Club
- Soccer Rising Stars
- Futsal Oz
- Fawkner Soccer Club
- Coburg Little Athletics
- Craigieburn Little Athletics
- Broadmeadows Basketball Association
- Craigieburne Eagles Basketball Club
- Craigieburn Cricket Club
- Roxburgh Park United Soccer Club
- Hume City Soccer Club



Fawkner Primary School

Active Travel Project

Introduction

This project was a partnership between Merri Health, Fawkner Primary School and Moreland City Council to increase student/family active travel rates.

This project addresses objective 5.8 of Merri Health's *Integrated Health Promotion Action Plan 2017-2018* to support primary and secondary schools in Fawkner to adopt aspects of a health promoting schools framework (Cancer Council, 2015) to promote social cohesion and/or local civic participation.

Project overview

This project aimed to:

- Increase the student active travel rate by 15% at Fawkner Primary School by the end of 2018
- Decrease car traffic on McBryde Street and Tyrell Crescent during drop off and pick up times at Fawkner Primary School
- Work with Moreland City Council to develop a case study of the project which can be shared with other schools in Moreland



Fawkner Primary School students on Ride2School Day 2018

Quick Facts

Years implemented

February 2018-July 2019

What is it?

A partnership project between Merri Health, Fawkner Primary School and Moreland City Council to increase active travel to school

Reach

223 direct
50 indirect

Key partners

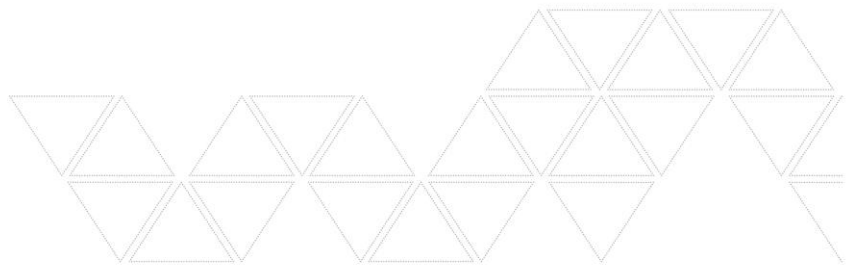
Fawkner Primary School
Merri Health
Moreland City Council

Key achievements

- 24% reduction in car use during school collection and drop off times
- 78% of students travelled actively to school (15% increase from 2017)
- On Walk Safely 2 School Day (18 May) 60% of students travelled actively to school (21% increase from 2017)
- \$4,000 of grant funding was received from Moreland City Council Walk to School program 2017

Challenges

- High levels of culturally and linguistically diverse students and families
- Although students and families respond really positively to Ride/Walk to school days, there is a strong culture of car dependency among school family communities overall



Project activities

Key activities of the project using the health promoting school framework (Cancer Council, 2015) included:

Social environment / culture

- The school celebrated Ride 2 School Day and Walk Safely 2 School Day
- On these days students and their families were encouraged to walk or ride, and celebrated with a healthy breakfast at school
- Raffle prizes and initiatives (scooter, drink bottles, pencil cases) given to students who walked/rode/scooted to school

Physical Environment

- 28 way-finding decals have been installed around the school to increase safety for students and families to walk and ride
- Moreland City Council donated a Go Pro to the school to assist with promotion of the decals to the school community

Curriculum in relation to health and wellbeing

- Students designed the decals during class time, holding a competition with their class-mates
- Bike education embedded into the curriculum for grade 3/4 students

Increased partnerships to support health and wellbeing

- The Action Team for the project consisted of 4 school staff, 1 Merri Health staff and 2 Moreland City Council staff (Social Policy and Traffic Engineering)
- The team met 7 times between February 2017 and May 2018
- An article in Moreland Leader newspaper on 21 May 2018 celebrated the success of the partnership project

Students are empowered to take action

- Grade 5/6 students designed footpath decals during an art completion in class time
- Students are responsible for undertaking the collection and entry of fortnightly “hands up” data on active travel rates
- School sustainability students engaged on the project



Students Aya, Alinar, Faliha, Jude, Logan and Zein from Fawkner Primary School on one of the walking paths. Picture: IAN CURRIE

FAWKNER

Walking to school made safe for students

STUDENTS at Fawkner Primary School stepped to it last week, showing off their new walking paths.

As part of National Walk Safely to School Day on May 18, students at the school strode out confidently thanks to new designs and signs.

Fawkner teacher Joe Mills said grade five and six students ran a competition to design signs for footpaths along safe routes to school.

The students chose the best of their own designs and weatherproof stickers were printed with the help of a grant from Moreland Council and Merri Community Health.

Two safe routes to school are now impressively sign-posted so children know the best way to walk, ride or

scoot and to remind them to cross safely.

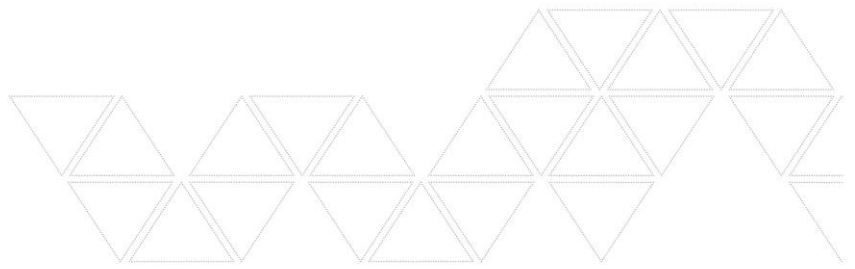
“When we started 30 per cent of students either walked or rode and we are up to 55 per cent now,” Mr Mills said.

“We even hit 75 per cent on Ride2School day (in March) and we’re really proud of that. There’s steady improvement all the time.”

Mr Mills said families who live too far from school to walk, scoot or ride all the way now drive to the start of the safe routes and the students make their way to school from there.

The next step planned for the students is to experiment making fun films of students using the safe routes with an action camera, such as a GoPro to be shown to other classmates.

[Article from the Moreland Leader 21/5/2018](#)



Evaluation

A highlight of the Active Travel Project was Ride2School Day on Friday, 23 March 2018.

Key achievements of Ride2School 2018 include:

- Healthy breakfast provided by Moreland City Council
- Whole school assembly, to discuss Active Travel Decal Project
- ‘Decal’ design winners announced and prizes awarded
- 74% of students active travel to school (best ever) on Ride To School Day – up 15% from 2017

Changes being considered for the year ahead

For the Active Travel project, 2018-2019 will be focused on building the confidence and capacity of the Active Travel Action Team to continue the work independently of the Youth Health Promotion Team so that EFT can be directed into other place-based strategies of the action plan.

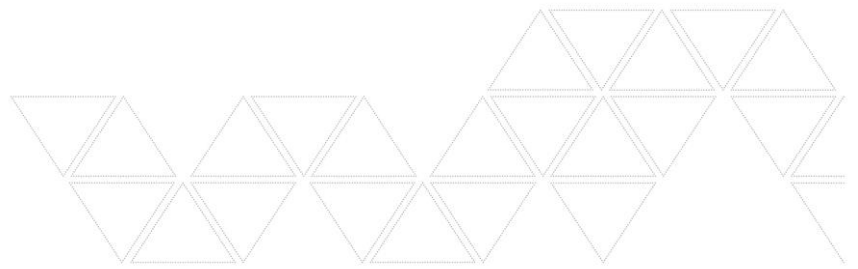
A priority for the Action Team is around supporting initiatives and engagement that will sustain the high rates of active travel on Walk2School or Ride2School days throughout the year.

“When we started, 30% of students either walked or rode and we are up to 55% now”

Joe Mills, Teacher

Key supporters

- Fawkner Primary School
- Moreland City Council’s Social Policy and Community Development team
- Moreland City Council’s Transport and Compliance team



The Little Long Walk

National Reconciliation Week

Introduction

The Little Long Walk is a partnership between Merri Health, The Long Walk Foundation, Aboriginal Community Elders Services (ACES), St Marks Catholic Primary School, Yarn Strong Sista and Ron Murray (cultural educators). It commemorates Australian Rules footballer Michael Long's historic trek in 2004 from his home in the suburbs of Melbourne all the way to Parliament House in Canberra, to get Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues back on the national agenda.

The event is an initiative of the Merri Health *Reconciliation Action Plan*, as well as a strategy Merri Health's *Integrated Health Promotion Action Plan 2017-2018* to partner with Fawkner schools to assist them to adopt a health promoting schools framework (Cancer Council, 2015) to improve health and wellbeing of the whole school community.

Project overview

The Little Long Walk raises awareness about the important role young people play in promoting reconciliation between wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Moreland.



Students from St Mark's Catholic Primary School walk along the culturally significant Merri Creek

Quick Facts

Date implemented

Friday 1 June 2018 (during National Reconciliation Week)

What is it?

- Partnership between Merri Health, The Long Walk Foundation, Aboriginal Community Elders Services (ACES) and St Marks Catholic Primary School
- Commemorates Australian Rules footballer Michael Long's historic trek in 2004 to get Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues back on the national agenda

Reach

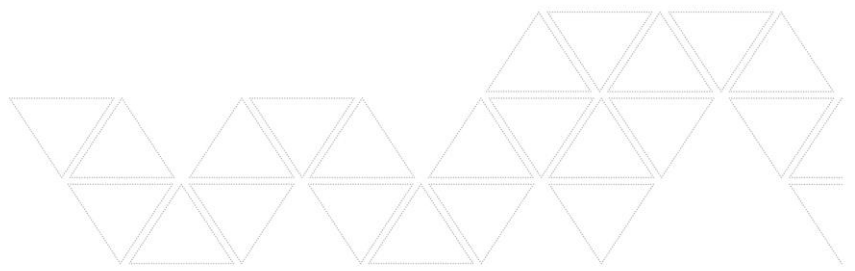
60 direct
167 indirect

Key partners

- Merri Health,
- The Long Walk Foundation,
- Aboriginal Community Elders Services (ACES)
- St Marks Catholic Primary School
- Yarn Strong Sista (educational and art consultant)
- Ron Murray (Cultural consultant)

Key achievements

- Winner of the 2017 Lisa Belleair Award for contribution to reconciliation activities
- This is The Little Long Walk's 3rd year
- Students and teachers indicated they loved the experience and learned a lot about Aboriginal culture
- The school included an Acknowledgement of Country in their school assembly practices



On Friday 1 June 2018, St Mark's Primary School undertook a whole-school assembly celebrating Aboriginal culture, where students presented research they had conducted relating to the National Reconciliation Week theme 'Don't Make History a Mystery'.

Ex-footballer and The Long Walk Ambassador Courtenay Dempsey spoke to the students and families about why they are important in the Reconciliation journey, and Michael Long's vision of learning and working together.

Following the assembly, Grade 5 and 6 students walked along the culturally significant Merri Creek to the Aboriginal Community Elders Service in East Brunswick. There students participated in art and story-telling activities, and also met with Elders.



Students listen to story-telling

Evaluation

In total, the project had a total of 50 students, 30 families (at the school assembly) and 3 staff members. Students and teachers from St Mark's Catholic Primary provided wonderful feedback about all aspects of the day.

Key changes that the school has undertaken because of the Little Long Walk include:

- Inclusion of an Acknowledgment of Country at school assemblies
- Considering Aboriginal songs at bell-time
- Celebrating Aboriginal culture, including Aboriginal students and families at the school (including their participation in The Little Long Walk)

"...it was great that Courtenay spoke and he was great. His message was very important"

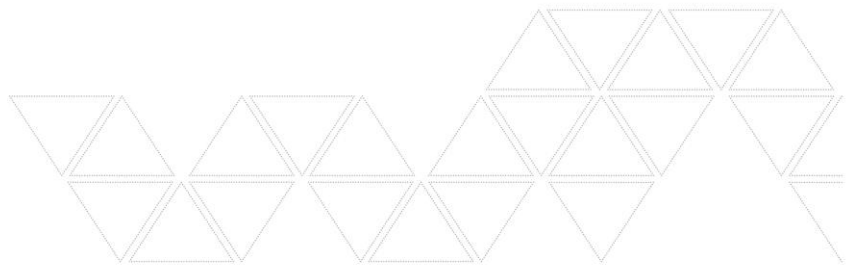
Teacher

"I really liked when we walked with the people and how we got along and represented the Aboriginal people"

Student

"I loved how we got to do art and I also love how we also did storytelling and the didgeridoo"

In 2017, The Little Long Walk was awarded the Lisa Belleair Award for contribution to reconciliation activities. It was also shortlisted for a HART (Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together) Award with Reconciliation Victoria.



Stand Out MOREland

Empowering young leaders in Moreland to make their schools safer and more inclusive

Introduction

This case study provides an overview of The Stand Out MOREland project; an initiative that successfully increased the agency of a community of young people in Moreland to make their schools and their community safer and more inclusive for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex (LGBTI+) people.

Research tells us 75% of LGBTI+ young people in Australia have experienced some form of homophobic or transphobic abuse, with much of this abuse occurring in schools and 81% of LGBTI+ young people not feeling supported by their school (Hillier, et al., 2010). Although most LGBTI Australians live healthy and happy lives, research has demonstrated that a disproportionate number experience poorer mental health outcomes and have higher risk of suicidal behaviours than their peers (National LGBTI Health Alliance, 2016).

A key goal of Merri Health's *Integrated Health Promotion Plan 2013-2017* was to promote mental health and wellbeing, and to reduce health inequities experienced by marginalised communities in Moreland.

Project overview

Supporting Stand Out groups to Stand Out MORE

Stand Out MOREland (SOM) aimed to empower, as well as increase the social connections of a community of young people from across Moreland to lead projects that create safer and more inclusive schools and communities for LGBTI+ young people.

The projects objectives:

- Provide leadership training to 12-15 Moreland students, with opportunities to practically apply their learnings
- Facilitate the creation of a network of young leaders in Moreland
- Provide opportunities for young people to effect change in their school and in their community

Quick Facts

Years implemented

Oct 2016 – Dec 2017

Key components

- Leadership training for students
- LGBTI+ inclusive initiatives in Moreland schools and the broader community
- Build a community of young leaders

No. of people involved

- SOM participants: 29
- SO participants: 82
- Teachers: Over 60 (Direct), 132 (Indirect)
- Students: Over 700 (Direct), 1623 (Indirect)
- Community members: 16,000 (direct)
- Partners: 10

Key stakeholders and partners

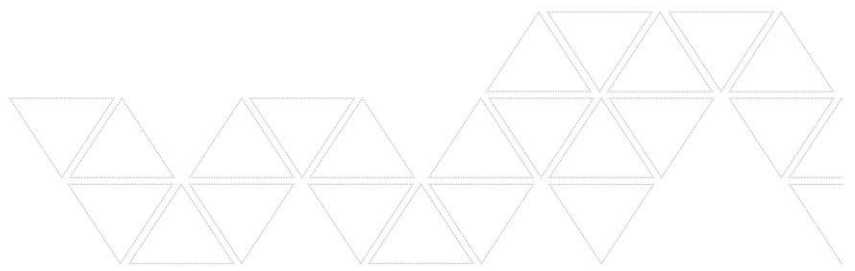
- Youth Affairs Council VIC
- Coburg High School
- Merri Health
- Pascoe Vale Girls College
- Brunswick Secondary College
- Sydney Rd Community School
- Youthworx Media
- Minus 18
- Moreland City Council (Youth Services, Human Rights Advisory committee)
- Rainbow Network

Key achievements

- Moreland City Council Community Event of the Year winner – The Rainbow Procession
- Significant improvements in all skill areas
- Significant improvements in confidence and ability to lead to lead
- Increased sense of connection to a community of young people in Moreland

Challenges

- Parental consents
- Time restraints of a lunchtime group
- Effects of postal vote
- Perceptions of negative community backlash



Through facilitated workshops, young people from different schools came together and learned key skills to become peer leaders. Then, within the context of their schools' individual Stand Out groups, participants worked to identify and action projects relevant to the needs of their school, as well as working collaboratively on cross-school and community projects that engage all of Moreland's residents with LGBTI+ safety and inclusion.

Stand Out

What is a Stand Out group?

A Stand Out (SO) group is a student led, social justice group that 'stands out' against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia (Ward, Radcliffe, & Scott, 2011). Members of SO groups work together on initiatives that make their schools safer and more inclusive for LGBTI+ students, as well as providing an important means of peer support for LGBTI+ students in attendance by providing a safe space for them to be themselves.

Safe Schools Coalition Victoria (SSCV) recommends SO groups as part of a whole of school approach to LGBTI+ safety and inclusion.

Project background

Establishing Stand Out groups in Moreland

In 2016, four Moreland secondary schools were members of SSCV. These included Coburg High School (CHS), Pascoe Vale Girls College (PVGS), Sydney Rd Community School (SRCS) and Brunswick Secondary College (BSC).

Of the four schools, two had pre-existing SO groups (CHS, PVGS). Merri Health engaged with all four schools to support existing groups as well as encourage and facilitate the development and implementation of new groups.

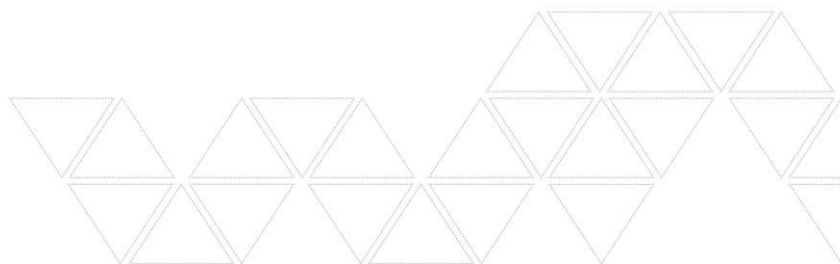
In October 2016, Merri Health was approached by CHS to partner on a HEY grant funding submission for collaborative student leadership project between the four schools, which became 'Stand Out MOREland' (SOM).

Project Outline

Project Planning: Jan- April 2017

- Planning commenced
- Evaluation plan formalised
- Baseline data collected
- Training schedule formalised
- Stand Out (SO) members undertook roles of chairperson and minute taker for SO sessions
- Online communication portal established to share minutes and allow for action and communication





- ‘LGBTI+ calendar’ created and shared by students, including major events such as IDAHOBIT (17 May) and Wear It Purple Day (28 August)
- Minor events commenced, such as Coburg High School (CHS) students creating a slideshow of ‘trans icons’ to be projected in a highly visible thoroughfare for International Transgender Day of Visibility (31 March)

Leadership training: April – November 2017

Between April and November 2017, seven after-school training sessions were completed (see topics covered in table opposite).

Attendance numbers were very healthy; meeting or exceeding the 12 person target every time, with numbers ranging from 12-24 participants.

Training sessions were opt-in and attendance records reveal:

- 29 participants engaged with at least one training session
- 18 participants engaged in over 3 sessions
- 6 participants engaged in all training sessions
- Each school was represented in each training session

Participants were tasked with sharing their learnings with their SO group after each training.

Concerns from students and staff meant that no training sessions were held during school hours or during school holidays.

Student Initiatives

Stand Out (SO) group initiatives

All Stand Out (SO) groups were encouraged and supported to undertake initiatives and actions to support LGBTI+ safety and inclusion in their schools.

To identify areas of focus, the groups used data examining the ‘cultures and attitudes’ within their school communities.

All SO participants were trained in the health promoting schools framework; an internationally recognised, evidence-informed framework that supports a systematic approach to effecting positive change within schools (Cancer Council, 2015).

This became a broad framework for the entire year and served as a starting point for all idea generation.

Training Topics	Delivered By
Effecting Change in Your School - the whole of school approach	Merri Health
Event planning and management	Moreland City Council
Self-care and bystander action	Minus 18
Making the most out of your Stand Out Group	Minus 18
Public speaking	Merri Health
Mental health pathways	Merri Health
Getting the most out of your social media – how to build your online following	Youthworx Media

The key identified issues relating to ‘culture and attitudes’ varied from school to school, however some themes were universal. These themes included:

- Correct pronoun usage
- Inclusive language
- Disclosures, and
- Casual homophobia

Initiatives targeted staff, students and families and focused on the schools physical environment, social environment, learning and skills, partnerships and community partnerships.

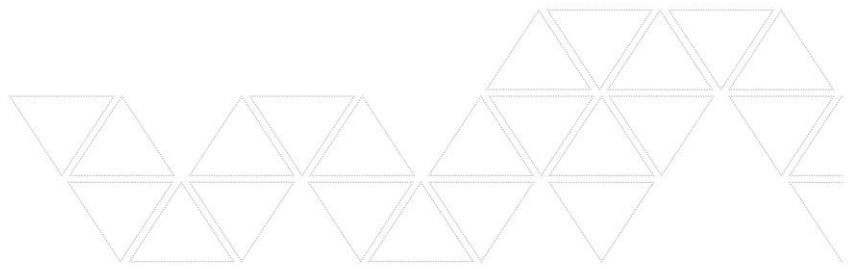
Across participating schools, the following activities were undertaken:

- 11 events planned and managed
- 3 social media accounts launched
- 9 public speaking opportunities
- 2 resource sharing strategies relating to bystander action

SO groups became increasingly confident in their ability to plan and action their ideas as the year progressed, with groups gaining more experience and familiarity working together.

Examples of student-led actions include:

- schools purchasing rainbow flags and painting rainbows on school grounds to demonstrate support



- “ALLY” badges supplied to students and staff
- gender neutral bathroom designated and decorated
- prizes for “most inclusive” staff member
- presentation to incoming Year 7 students about Stand Out groups

The Rainbow Procession – May 2017

In May 2017, to mark the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT), over 400 Moreland community members participated in The Rainbow Procession: A large scale public art event.

Stand Out (SO) groups were involved in a range of activities including event planning, artistic direction, and a range of other leadership roles on the day.

Participants worked together to create giant moving pictures and messages of support and allyship, which were captured aerially by drone. The sea of rainbow umbrellas then processed through the busy Moreland intersection of Sydney Rd and Bell St, literally stopping traffic.

The event engaged over 380 Moreland secondary school students and teachers including:

- BSC (80 students, 5 teachers)
- CHS (213 students, 13 teachers)
- SRCS (70 students, 8 teachers)
- PVGC students (15 students, 1 teacher)

Others in attendance included:

- Partners (YGLAM, Rainbow Network, council staff and Councilors)
- Police Victoria
- Service providers
- Community members

Stand Out MOREland (SOM) participants collaborated with local queer youth theatre ensemble YGLAM in the creation of a film for the event, which received almost 16,000 views on Facebook.

A survey with SO participants’ showed that young people felt a great sense of ownership and pride over the event. Participants were asked to choose the one thing that they were most proud of accomplishing this year. The Rainbow Procession was by far the most cited answer, with almost 40% of responses.

Highlights of The Rainbow Procession include:

- Winner: ‘Community Event of the Year’ in the 2017 Moreland Awards
- The video of the event received 16,000 views on Facebook

- Participation in The Rainbow Procession led immediately to the establishment of a SO group at one school (Brunswick Secondary College), with over 30 students at the first meeting
- We saw an increase in SO group participation numbers in all schools
- The event provided the first opportunity for SOM participants to collaborate on a project

Video Resources

To mark the end of SOM, participants collaborated on two video resources that tackle the four universal issues found with all participating schools. Students from all four schools participated in writing the script and performing on screen. The videos targeted incoming Year 7 students and incoming/casual relief teachers. They outline the school’s commitment to LGBTI+ safety and inclusion as well as tips on correct pronoun usage, inclusive language, dealing with disclosures, bystander action and casual homophobia.

Schools have been incredibly receptive to using the videos, with commitments made to have staff and students view them. One school (CHS) has even committed to the ‘teacher’ focused video being included into the staff orientation process.

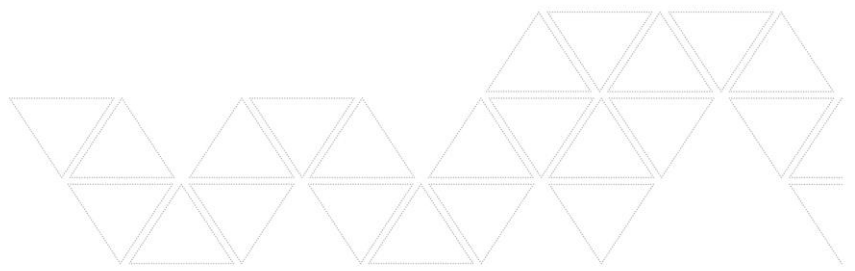


Student Video

<https://vimeo.com/youthworxproductions/review/248096771/4cf5299c33>

Teacher Video

<https://vimeo.com/youthworxproductions/review/248094265/1688ada78f>



STAND OUT MORE(LAND)

KEY FINDINGS

TAKING THE LEAD

Participants were much more comfortable to take the lead in a given situation after participating in Stand Out Moreland, with 89% of participants agreeing that they were confident to take the lead (an increase of 31%).

BRIGHT IDEAS

Before the commencement of the project, 62% of participants agreed that they had lots of good ideas. This figure jumped to a whopping 100% by the projects completion.

CONFIDENCE

It seems that participating in Stand Out Moreland builds confidence! After completing Stand Out Moreland participants perception of self confidence jumped a staggering 23%.

TAKING ACTION

Participants felt more confident to take action around problems in their school, as well as feeling that they had the ability to make a difference in their school. Over 20% more people agreed with these statements after completing Stand Out Moreland.

CONNECTION

84% of participants agreed that Stand Out Moreland had made them feel more aware of other Stand Out groups and more connected to a community of LGBTI+ young people in Moreland.

SKILLS BUILDING

Post evaluation data shows improvements in all learning areas including

- EVENT MANAGEMENT
- PUBLIC SPEAKING
- ALLYSHIP
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- BYSTANDER ACTION

Evaluation: December 2017

Post evaluation data

Evaluation data was collected from three sources for Stand Out MOREland (SOM), including:

- SOM participants (29 pre, 18 post)
- SO participants (48 post)
- CHS students (320 pre, 167 post)

Analysis of post evaluation data indicates that SOM has been very successful in achieving its aims and objectives, with results showing improvements in all learning areas, as well as confidence and leadership.

Results

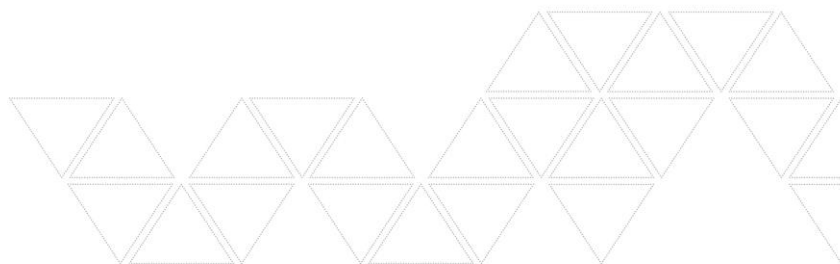
Objective 1: Provide leadership training to 12-15 Moreland students, with opportunities to practically apply their learnings

Analysis indicates that participants have shown marked improvement in all skill building areas, as well as confidence in engaging and using these new skills.

Question	Pre	Post	
I feel confident in my ability to plan an event	64	89	+25
I feel confident in my ability to manage an event	72	90	+18
I know how to utilize social media promote my endeavors	79	95	+16
I am a confident public speaker	58	79	+21
I am aware of challenged faced by LGBTI+ people	100	100	n/a
I know about different types of leadership styles	84	85	+1
I feel confident in my ability to raise awareness on how to be a good ally	92	100	+8
I know what to do if I see or hear homophobia/biphobia/transphobia	86	95	+9
I feel confident to educate others on the above	83	90	+7

Similarly, clear improvements can be seen in relation to confidence around leadership:

Question	Pre	Post	
I feel confident to take the lead in a situation	59	89	+30



Objective 2: Facilitate the creation of a network of young leaders in Moreland

Participants clearly feel a closer connection to likeminded young people in Moreland through their participation in SOM as well as a greater awareness of other SO groups in Moreland.

Question	Pre	Post	
Other students support my ideas	59	73	+14
I know how to support other people's ideas	89	100	+11
I contribute to my schools direction and actions	82	90	+8
My Stand Out group is in contact with other Stand Out group's in Moreland	64	90	+26
I'm aware what other schools are doing	67	79	+12
SOM has made me more aware of other Stand Out groups	n/a	84	n/a
SOM has made me feel more connected to a community of young LGBTI people	n/a	84	n/a

Objective 3: Provide opportunities for young people to effect change in their school and in their community

QUESTION	Pre	Post	
I feel confident that I have good ideas	62	100	+38
I feel confident to put my ideas into action	65	84	+19
I have the ability to make a difference in my school	64	85	+21
I have the ability to make a difference in other people's school	52	42	-10
I have the ability to make a difference in my community	83	84	+1
Teachers in my school value the ideas of students	89	74	-5
Other students support my ideas	59	73	+14
I know how to support other people's ideas	89	100	+11
I know how to take action around problems within my school	63	84	+21
I have made positive changes within my school	60	74	+14
I contribute to my schools direction and actions	82	90	+8

Students' confidence in their ability to effect change in their school has improved significantly, while their perceived ability to effect change in their community was always strong. Interestingly, while they are much more aware of what other SO groups are doing, their perceived ability to effect change in other schools has dropped.

Opportunities to participate in community events significantly impacted SO participants:

- 40% of SO participants chose The Rainbow Procession as the achievement of which they were most proud in 2017
- The Rainbow Procession was the second most popular answer when asked to choose the thing that was the most fun this year (second only to Stand Out Meetings)

Whole School Data

300 CHS students were surveyed at the beginning and the end of the project with the aim of tracking any changes in culture or perception around LGBTI+ safety and inclusion at their school.

Results show little difference in their answers pre and post intervention. This is unsurprising in such a short time frame, and also considering the marked increase in observed homophobia/biphobia/transphobia caused by the 2017 postal vote on same sex marriage in Australia.

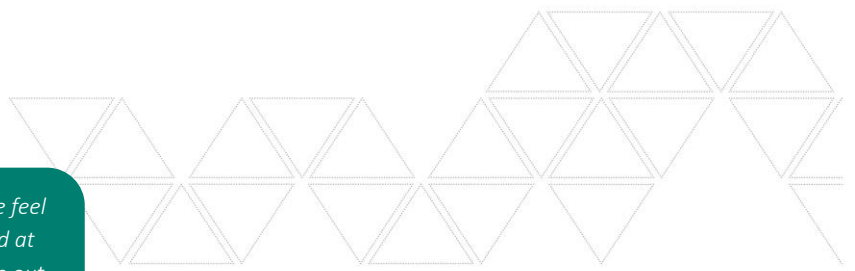
Further indicators of interest

- 72% of SO participants are same sex attracted and/ or sex/gender diverse
- The top two reasons people are part of a SO group is for the peer support and because they are passionate about social justice.
- 100% of participants agree that it's important for schools to have a SO group
- When asked how SO makes them feel, the most common response was 'happy' (37%), followed by safe (31%)

Conclusion

SOM was highly successful in achieving its aims to increase the agency of young people in Moreland to make their schools and their community safer and more inclusive for LGBTI+ people.

Participants are more confident in their ability to lead, are more skilled leaders, are more confident to effect change in their schools and are more connected to a community of likeminded individuals.



"This group helped me feel safe to come out, and at least if you can't come out you can be yourself whilst at Stand Out meetings."

"The thing I liked most about SOM was getting together with people from other schools, because I don't really get to spend a lot of time with LGBTI people"

"I go to Stand Out because I need people to talk to about my identity, my life and how to stay happy"

Challenges

Parental consent

Parental consent forms proved to be a significant barrier for many young people wanting to access SOM leadership training sessions after school. While students were interested in coming, many felt uncomfortable asking care givers consent because they perceived a risk of disclosing their sexuality or gender identity by being involved.

Initially all forms were corrected to clearly state that SOM was targeting allies, but students still felt too uncomfortable.

Eventually all training sessions were moved to Merri Health, who are governed by laws of informed consent for clients 14 years and over, meaning that parental consent was only needed for people 13 and under. This removed the barrier for many participants.

Time constraints

While SO participants are motivated and hard-working, having the constraint of a 40-55 minute lunch break was often challenging.

Postal vote

The postal vote on same sex marriage in Australia in 2017 was a stressful time for many participants. Many participants witnessed increases in homophobic/biphobic/transphobic actions against themselves or others.

Self-care, mental health pathways and bystander action were all elements of SOM training. Students and staff spoke openly about their feelings and how to best deal with them. The experience led to a deeper understanding of the importance of good mental health and wellbeing and how to best react to these kinds of behaviours. It stands to reason that the experience also informed student perception that SO is a safe place that provides peer support.

Future activities

What's next?

Due to the success of SOM, Merri Health will partner with Moreland City Council (Aspiring Leaders Program) in 2018 to support John Fawkner College and Glenroy Secondary College to become a Safe School and to establish SO groups in a similar initiative called The ALLYance.

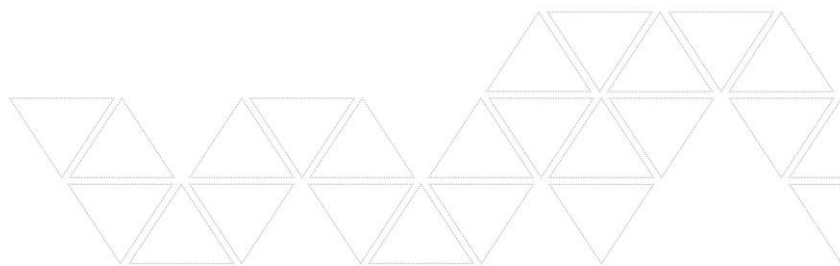
Schools that participated in SOM in 2017 will continue to run their SO groups independently and initiatives will continue in these schools.

Collaborations between SO groups will continue next year. Plans for IDAHOBIT are already underway with an expected reach of 1,000 people from 6 schools.

Key supporters

Integral to the success of the project has been the partnership between Coburg High School and Merri Health, as well as Brunswick Secondary College, Pascoe Vale Girls College and Sydney Rd Community School.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of Youth Affairs Council VIC, Youthworx Media, Minus 18 Moreland City Council, Minus 18, Rainbow Network Urdu speaking Women's group and CHS futsal team.



Coburg Primary School

Whole of School Approach to Healthy Eating

Introduction

This project was a partnership between the whole school community at Coburg Primary, Merri Health, New Eden Consultancy and Peppertree Place.

The project sits within under the strategy to support schools to adopt a health promoting schools framework (Cancer Council, 2015) to improve health and wellbeing for students, staff, families and the broader community under Merri Health's *Integrated Health Promotion Action Plan 2017-2018*.

Project overview

The project aimed to:

- use the health promoting schools framework to embed healthy eating behaviours, environment and culture across the school community
- increase the number of vegetable items recorded in student lunchboxes by 20% by Term 3 2018
- decrease the number of sugary or salty foods recorded in student lunchboxes by 15% by Term 3 2018

Project activities

Key activities of the project using the health promoting school framework included:

Social environment / culture

- Draft Healthy Eating Policy developed with staff, parents and leadership ready for consultation with broader school community
- Staff Professional Development sessions included workshops on how compost

Physical environment

- Weekly student-led healthy snacks canteen introduced to the senior campus
- Student-led composting collection introduced to senior campus

Quick Facts

Years implemented

July 2013 to June 2018

What is it?

A partnership project to apply the health promoting schools framework to create a whole school environment that supports healthy eating behaviours among students, families and staff

Reach

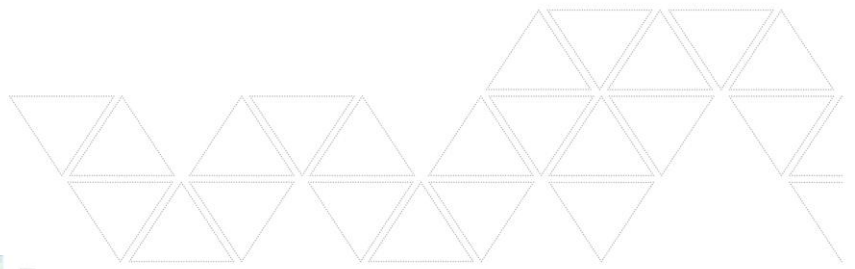
400 student, families and staff community

Key partners

Staff, students, leadership and parents of Coburg Primary School
Peppertree Place
New Eden Consultancy

Key achievements

- Student leadership led a whole school lunchbox audit on 109 lunchboxes
- Student leadership
- New student-led healthy canteen commenced on the senior school campus in 2017
- Student leadership with support from teaching staff led a healthy eating competition to all 290 school students
- Kitchen Garden program embedded into the curriculum program for Grade 3 and Grade 4 students from 2017
- \$10,000 in grant funds received to support the healthy eating priority at Coburg Primary since 2016



Excerpt from [Healthy Schools Video](#): students participating in kitchen garden program

Curriculum in relation to health and wellbeing

- Kitchen Garden Program embedded into Grade 3 and 4 curriculum since 2017

Increased partnerships to support health and wellbeing

- Partnership established between New Eden Consultancy; Merri Health; Peppertree Place and CPS to expand kitchen garden program
- Healthy Eating Action Team (representation from Merri Health; Peppertree Place; Coburg Primary Principal, teaching staff, parent and students; New Eden Garden Consultancy) met 7 times between July 2017- June 2018

Students are empowered to take action

- 24 students led the delivery of whole-of-school lunchbox audit with 109 students and week-long healthy eating challenge in 2017
- As part of the kitchen garden program, Grade 3/4 students introduced a weekly healthy snacks canteen for students

"Student attitudes to healthy food have definitely changed" [since participating in the program]

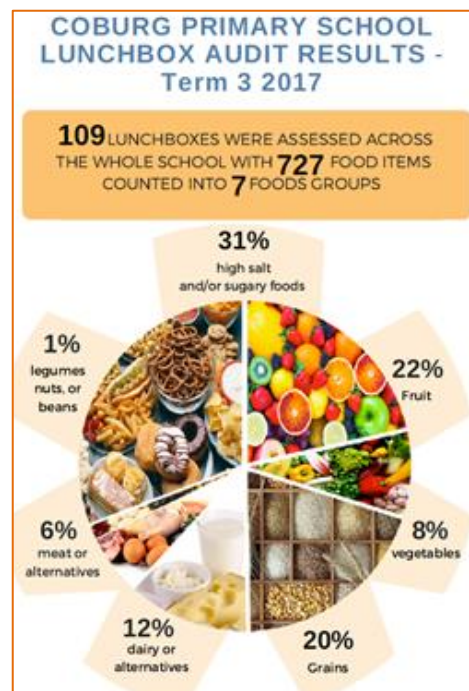
Teacher, Coburg Primary

Evaluation

A highlight of the Healthy Eating Project was the lunchbox audit completed in September 2017.

Some key achievements of the lunchbox audit

- 109 lunchboxes surveyed across the school
- 28 students led the lunchbox audit over 2 audit sessions
- Results were created into an infographic and published in the school newsletter
- Results helped students to plan their whole school healthy eating challenge
- Created baseline data that allowed the school to set healthy eating targets

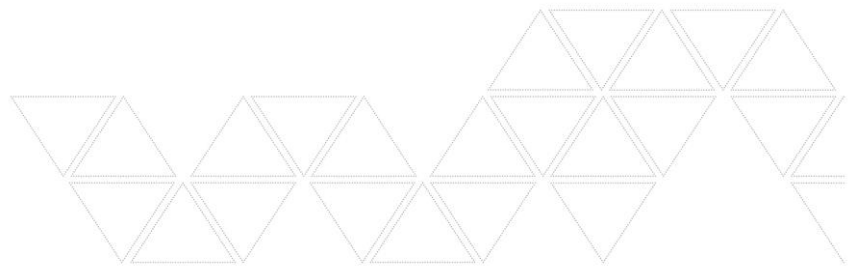


Infographic of lunchbox audit results 2017

Key supporters

- Coburg Primary School
- Peppertree Place
- New Eden Consultancy

We would also like to acknowledge Moreland City Council for their support with the 'Learn, Grow, Share' program via a community grant of \$5,000.



Gender Equality in Merri Health

A whole of organisation approach to the primary prevention of violence against women

Introduction

The Gender Equality in Merri Health project (the project) is a phased, whole of organisation approach to the primary prevention of violence against women (PVAW).

Violence against women is the largest contributor to preventable illness, injury and death in women aged between 15 and 44, and there is clear evidence that

exposure to violence is a key determinant for poor health in women across many areas.

Gender inequality is the key driver of violence against women, and workplaces, such as Merri Health, are important settings in which gender equity can be promoted for the primary prevention of violence against women.

Quick Facts

Years implemented

July 2013 to June 2018 (ongoing)

What is it?

Increasing gender equity across:

- Partnerships and leadership
- Communications and training
- Physical and policy environments

Reach

438 direct

666 indirect

Key partners

Merri Health Family Violence Project Committee
Building a Respectful Community Partnership
Women's Health in the North

Key achievements

- Increases across all objectives
- Commitment to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation

Challenges

- Adaptation to new and updated frameworks
- Large-scale sectoral reforms which limited capacity for this project across the organisation

Project overview

This project aims to increase gender equality across Merri Health partnerships and leadership, communications and training, and physical and policy environments, for the primary prevention of violence against women.

The project was implemented in 2 phases, Phase 1: Development and Phase 2: Implementation, with Phase 3: Sustainability currently underway.

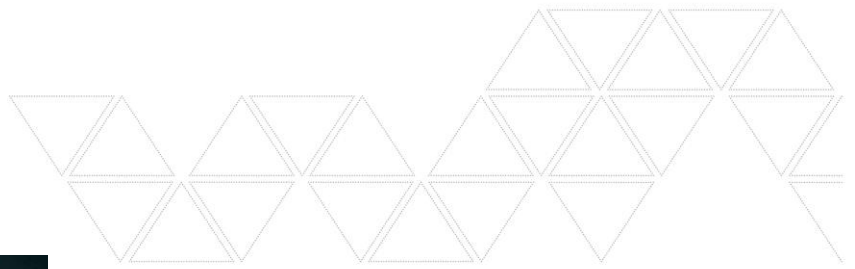
This project aligns with Merri Health's *Integrated Health Promotion Strategic Plan 2017-2021* priority area of Prevention of Violence Against Women and setting of Merri Health.

Project activities

Phase 1: Development (2013-2015)

Literature review

At the time of this project's development, workplaces as settings for comprehensive PVAW initiatives were in their infancy. In order to identify ways that Merri Health could influence the gendered drivers of violence against women, a comprehensive literature review was completed in 2014. The literature review identified 10 domains in which workplaces can influence the gendered drivers of violence against women.



Merri's acting CEO signs on to the regional partnership to prevent violence against women, led by Women's Health in the North

Organisational audit

An organisational audit was developed in June 2015 to investigate Merri's current status across 10 domains and to serve as baseline data for the project.

The organisational audit tools were:

- Staff survey – Consultation with 90 employees regarding their experiences of gender equity, respect and non-violence in the workplace
- Site audit – 5 site audits conducted with representatives from each site
- Document audit – Review of policies, procedures, position descriptions, brochures and website

Consultation

In developing the organisational audit tools and gathering baseline data, the Community Wellbeing team:

- Consulted with the Building a Respectful Community (BRC) regional partnership in relation to content and design of the audit tools
- Consulted with two Merri Health committees in relation to the audit tools
- Consulted with the Manager Facilities, in relation to the content of the site audit tool
- Presented the business case and audit tools to the Management and Executive Leadership Teams

Phase 2: Implementation (2015-2018)

Based on the findings from Phase 1 of the project, a project plan was developed with the following objectives and activities, and endorsed by Merri's Family Violence Project Committee in 2016.

Objective 1: Increase number and quality of partnerships and leadership promoting gender equality in Merri Health by June 2018.

Activities included:

- Advocating for increased focus on PVAW in Merri's Family Violence Project Committee
- Contribution to regional PVAW partnerships

Objective 2: Increase knowledge, attitudes and skills for gender equality among Merri staff by June 2018.

Activities included:

- Internal communications plan
- Training for all staff and management, in partnership with Women's Health in the North

Objective 3: Increase physical environment features promoting gender equality by June 2018.

Activities included:

- Recommendations on site audits
- Development of gender equality site checklist
- Site updates

Objective 4: Increase number of policies promoting gender equality by June 2018.

Activities included:

- Recommendations on policy audit
- Policy development and policy updates

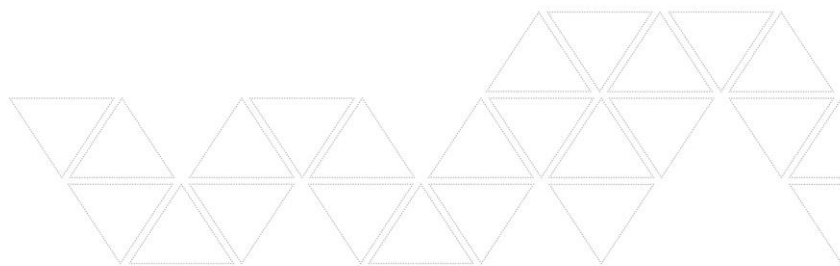
Evaluation

A repeat organisational audit was completed in August 2017 including:

- Staff survey – consultation with 112 employees regarding their experiences of gender equity, respect and non-violence in the workplace
- Site audit – 9 site audits conducted with representatives from each site
- Document audit – review of policies, procedures and position descriptions

"Very progressive and gender conscious service. It's been very refreshing, also as a male I haven't struck any 'reverse sexism'"

Merri Health employee



Achievements

This project saw positive changes to all objectives.

Reach

- 69% of employees surveyed were aware of Merri Health's Gender Equality project
- An estimated 60% of employees had participated in project activities

Objective 1: Leadership and partnerships

- Increased focus and commitment to PVAW in Merri committees, projects and partnerships
- Increased staff perceptions of managers supporting and modelling gender equality

Objective 2: Knowledge, attitudes and skills

- Increased staff knowledge, attitudes and skills for gender equity and PVAW

Objective 3: Physical environments

- Improvements to gender equitable displays and increased access to baby change tables for all genders
- Maintained high level of employees who agreed Merri's sites and facilities were safe and meet their needs as an employee

Objective 4: Policy

- Development of three new policies and amendments to two policies supporting gender equity and PVAW

Challenges

A wide range of PVAW frameworks and resources were released during this project's implementation period, which proved challenging to integrate, particularly to evaluation. Additionally, the influence of regional PVAW activities cannot be separated from this project, so causation cannot be determined.

A significant challenge was large-scale systemic changes to core business, including aged care reform and the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, which occurred during the implementation period. This, as well as staff turnover, reduced capacity for this project across the organisation, causing delays to anticipated timelines.

Lessons learnt

Relationship development across Merri Health teams was crucial and involved recognising existing organisational expertise, while building capacity for best practice, evidence-based PVAW.

Partnership with Women's Health in the North and the Building a Respectful Community regional partnership provided access to PVAW expertise, and an opportunity for dissemination of this project's findings.

Persistent and opportunistic health promotion work was influential in the face of capacity constraints.

Future activities

Phase 3: Ongoing Sustainability (2018-2021)

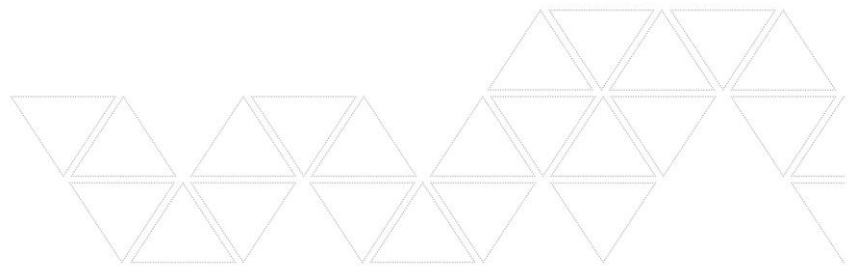
Merri Health is currently assessing readiness for application to the Employer of Choice for Gender Equality (EOCGE) citation from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.

The EOCGE transitions the leadership of this work to the Human Resources team, positioning gender equity as core business and indicating a transition to embeddedness within the organisation.

Key supporters

We would like to acknowledge our partners Women's Health in the North and the Building a Respectful Community Partnership for their support.

We would also like to acknowledge the contribution of teams across Merri Health, including Human Resources, Facilities, Communications and the Family Violence Project Committee.



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